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# Leadership Style And Diversionary Theory Of Foreign Policy: The Use Of Diversionary Strategies By Middle Eastern Leaders During And In The Immediate Aftermath Of The Gulf War

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## **Abstract**

The diversionary theory of war is one of the most speculated about and debated theories in foreign policy literature. The theory argues that government leaders who are confronted with public antagonism over domestic economic, social, and political problems sometimes start wars to divert their populaces' attention from domestic problems and therefore to survive politically. Numerous foreign policy conflicts have been interpreted as being diversionary in nature and it has been commonplace for analysts to examine the domestic politics and problems of countries that engage in international conflict. Specifically, the use of force by US Presidents against external actors, such as U.S. President George H.W. Bush's operation against Grenada and the First Gulf War, and U.S. President Bill Clinton's operations against Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan and its supposed "rally round the flag effect" have been investigated by foreign policy experts.

In this dissertation, I address some limitations of the literature on the diversionary theory of war through some significant revisions. My revisions are intended to extend the scope and expand the content of the literature in order to transform the theory from a theory of war to a foreign policy theory. In addition, I try to contribute to the theoretical development of the literature by bringing the leader back into the diversionary theory and incorporating it into the current literature on foreign policy leadership studies. First, I argue that there are alternative ways for leaders to divert the attention of the domestic public other than the use of force, including less aggressive, less risky and less costly strategies, such as crisis building and escalation and peaceful foreign policy initiatives, such as presidential dramas, summits, and peacemaking ventures. Experts on public opinion, voting behavior, and scholars of presidential studies have demonstrated in previous studies the rallying effect of these different foreign policy actions. And some of the more recent studies have indicated the possibility of the domestic use of overseas trips, peace conferences and peaceful foreign policy

gestures by US presidents. In fact, as scholars of foreign policy substitutability have stated, if there are alternative routes for foreign policy decision makers to attain their goals, then it would seem plausible that decision makers who are confronted with certain problems or subjected to certain stimuli would, under certain conditions, substitute one such route for another. In the context of diversionary behavior, a leader may employ one foreign policy response to divert attention from domestic problems in one circumstance, but then at a different time, employ a different foreign policy response. In fact, the idea of substitutability gives multiple foreign policy options for leaders to divert the domestic public's attention from domestic problems and this should be taken into consideration theoretically. In my study, I bring together the findings of different studies with diversionary literature in order to attain a more integrative approach in domestic politics and foreign policy linkage.

In addition, most of the studies on the diversionary theory of war have been conducted on the political use of force by US presidents, which rests on a false assumption that only US presidents have employed this strategy in their dealings with domestic opposition, that only leaders of democracies would need to use this strategy, and that only democracies with substantial economic and military power would be able to afford to use this strategy. The explanation advanced for these assumptions is twofold. First of all, the proponents of this view argue that authoritarian leaders can forcibly suppress any form of opposition or dissent in their countries and therefore need not be concerned with diverting the domestic public's attention away from domestic problems, whereas democratic leaders do not have the capacity to use excessive force against their citizens and therefore, in order to survive politically, must deflect the domestic public's attention away from domestic problems. Secondly, they argue that implementing foreign policies for domestic purposes may be extremely costly and risky and therefore only leaders of relatively affluent nations with considerable military power can use these strategies.

Contrary to these assumptions, studies on authoritarian regimes and authoritarian leaders have demonstrated that even the most authoritarian or totalitarian leaders have certain constituencies to whom they must pay attention and have accountability, such as the politburos, the political elites, or institutions, such as the military. Similar studies have shown that such leaders are also concerned about possible mass uprisings and therefore try to take into consideration people's reaction to their policies. In addition, as I argue above, there are ways of diverting the domestic public's attention that are less costly and risky than the strategies on which the diversionary theory has traditionally focused and therefore accessible to countries that are not affluent.

After these amendments, I focus on the relationship between political leaders and diversionary strategies, which has been neglected by scholars in the field. Mainstream scholarship has considered the act of diversion as an externalization of domestic problems and conflict to the realm of foreign policy. Most scholars who have propounded the diversionary theory of war have regarded political leaders, especially US presidents, as empty vessels in this process. Despite red flags by some reviewers of literature, these studies have neglected the role of leaders and the impact that political leaders can exert on this process. However, studies on leadership and literature on foreign policy decision making have manifested that leadership traits and styles matter in the making of foreign policy. These studies have also shown that although numerous domestic and international factors influence foreign policies, these influences are channeled through a decision maker who creates and implements the foreign policy. Bringing agency back into diversionary scholarship will shift the research focus from a simple question of whether domestic unrest provides leaders with an incentive to engage in diversionary conflict abroad to when it does, how their leadership style will influence the diversionary strategy chosen and implemented. In order to understand this relationship, we need to open the black box of the government and analyze the leadership traits of decision makers.

This dissertation focuses on Middle Eastern leaders who used diversionary strategies during the First Gulf War in 1991 and in its immediate aftermath. Some of the foreign policies of Hafiz Assad of Syria, King Hussein of Jordan, and Saddam Hussein of Iraq during this period have been interpreted as intended to divert the attention of their people and unify their people around their flags. These foreign policies will be analyzed in relation to the leadership traits of the three Middle Eastern political leaders.

**LEADERSHIP STYLE AND DIVERSIONARY THEORY OF FOREIGN POLICY: THE  
USE OF DIVERSIONARY STRATEGIES BY MIDDLE EASTERN LEADERS DURING  
AND IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE GULF WAR**

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*To my mom Halide Kanat*



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## INTRODUCTION

The diversionary theory of war is one of the most speculated about and debated theories in foreign policy literature. The theory argues that government leaders who are confronted with public antagonism over domestic economic, social, and political problems sometimes start wars to divert their populace's attention from domestic problems and therefore to survive politically. This theory of externalization has been widely discussed among foreign policy scholars, including Levy (1989), James and Hristoulos (1994), Stohl (1980), Ostrom and Job (1986), James and O'Neal (1991), Wang (1996), DeRouen (1995), and Morgan and Bickers (1992). Numerous foreign policy conflicts have been interpreted as being diversionary in nature and it has been commonplace for analysts to examine the domestic politics and problems of countries that engage in international conflict. Specifically, the use of force by US Presidents against external actors, such as U.S. President George H.W. Bush's operation against Grenada and the First Gulf War, and U.S. President Bill Clinton's operations against Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan and its supposed "rally round the flag effect" have been investigated by foreign policy experts.

In addition to being the subject of many scholarly writings and policy analyses, the diversionary theory has been a source of criticism to the aggressive foreign policy actions of states. Especially, it has provided an ample amount of raw material to novelists, writers, and directors to describe the domestic motivations of international conflicts and wars. An early example was George Orwell's seminal book, *1984*. In *1984*, Orwell told the story of a government of a fictional country that

mobilizes its people against an unknown enemy and for an unknown conflict. The government constantly used this unknown enemy in order to rally its people and solidify their allegiances and loyalties. More recently, popular culture has witnessed a rapid rise in satirical fictional political productions about the diversionary motivations of political leaders. Most prominently, *Wag the Dog*, a film directed by Barry Levinson and starring Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman, described the attempts of a fictional president's aides to create a fake war with the state of Albania, in order to divert the public's attention from a White House sex scandal during an election year (Levinson, 1997). The film was said to be inspired by a 1993 novel by Larry Beinhart entitled *American Hero*, which speculated that Operation Desert Storm was a plot to rally the American electorate around George H.W. Bush (Beinhart, 2004). However, after the film was released in 1997, many analysts believed that it more closely resembled President Clinton's purported use of *Operation Infinite Reach* to divert attention from the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal. In another example, *Canadian Bacon*, the director Michael Moore told the story of a fictional US president who wages war against Canada in order to distract the public's attention from domestic economic and social problems in a post-Cold War environment (Moore, 1995).

Despite the burgeoning literature and numerous case studies on the diversionary theory and the increasing circulation of the theory through journalistic accounts and popular culture, there is still not a consensus among scholars about the nature, timing, and consequences of diversionary wars. Theoretical and methodological discussions about the studies on the diversionary theory of war are occurring in the discipline of political science with the contributions of sociologists, historians and psychologists. Despite the presence of discord in the literature, the theory still receives considerable attention from both academic and policy circles, mainly because it accords with an intuitive sense of how politics works.

In this dissertation, I address some limitations of the literature on the diversionary theory of war through some significant revisions. My revisions are intended to extend the scope and expand the content of the literature in order to transform the theory from a theory of war to a foreign policy theory. In addition, I try to contribute to the theoretical development of the literature by bringing the leader back into the diversionary theory and incorporating it into the current literature on foreign policy leadership studies. First, I argue that there are alternative ways for leaders to divert the attention of the domestic public other than the use of force, including less aggressive, less risky and less costly strategies, such as crisis building and escalation and peaceful foreign policy initiatives, such as presidential dramas, summits, and peacemaking ventures. Experts on public opinion, voting behavior, and scholars of presidential studies have demonstrated in previous studies the rallying effect of these different foreign policy actions. And some of the more recent studies have indicated the possibility of the domestic use of overseas trips, peace conferences and peaceful foreign policy gestures by US presidents. In fact, as scholars of foreign policy substitutability have stated, if there are alternative routes for foreign policy decision makers to attain their goals, then it would seem plausible that decision makers who are confronted with certain problems or subjected to certain stimuli would, under certain conditions, substitute one such route for another. In the context of diversionary behavior, a leader may employ one foreign policy response to divert attention from domestic problems in one circumstance, but then at a different time, employ a different foreign policy response. For example, a leader may rally the people around a common cause instead of against a common enemy and a diplomatic victory can provide as much popularity as a victory on the battleground. In fact, the idea of substitutability gives multiple foreign policy options for leaders to divert the domestic public's attention from domestic problems and this should be taken into consideration theoretically. In my study, I bring together the findings of different studies with

diversionary literature in order to attain a more integrative approach in domestic politics and foreign policy linkage.

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This dissertation focuses on Middle Eastern leaders who used diversionary strategies during the First Gulf War in 1991 and in its immediate aftermath. Some of the foreign policies of Hafiz Assad of Syria, King Hussein of Jordan, and Saddam Hussein of Iraq during this period have been interpreted as intended to divert the attention of their people and unify their people around their flags. These foreign policies include Saddam Hussein's attempt to create a "rally round the flag effect" in Iraq and in the Arab world by escalating tension with Israel and by sending missiles to Israeli cities, King Hussein's support to Saddam Hussein (despite pressures from Western powers and Arab states) in order to distract the attention of his people from recurring economic problems and to unify them amid increasing social rift between Palestinians and native Jordanians, and Hafiz al-Assad's

participation to the peace talks after the Gulf War and later his escalation of conflict with Israel to shift the focus and agenda of the Syrian people. These foreign policies will be analyzed in relation to the leadership traits of the three Middle Eastern political leaders.

The dissertation is organized into two main parts. In the first part, Chapter 1 reviews the literature in the field of diversionary theory of war and the theoretical reformulations offered in this study and Chapter 2 explains the methodology of the dissertation. The next three chapters in the second part of the dissertation contain three cases of the use of diversionary strategies in the Middle East. Chapter 3 covers Saddam Hussein's use of conflictual strategies, Chapter 4 outlines King Hussein and his use of cooperative strategies and Chapter 5 is on Hafiz al-Assad and the use of multiple strategies. Chapter 7 provides a conclusion and suggestions for future research.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **DIVERSIONARY THEORY OF FOREIGN POLICY AND LEADERSHIP STYLES**

#### **Review of the Literature**

In the international relations literature, and especially within its predominant theories including but not limited to neorealism, the role of domestic factors in shaping states' foreign policies has largely been ignored. For many years, models that depict the state as a rational unitary actor, billiard ball, or black box have dominated international relations theories and inter-state relations have been considered a separate realm from domestic politics. Contrary to the neorealist school in international relations which emphasizes the effects of exogenous factors and international variables, some scholars have stressed the significance of domestic variables in explaining the foreign policy behavior of countries (Zakaria, 1992; Jacobsen, 1996).<sup>1</sup> Such scholars have tried to develop theoretical and methodological approaches in order to demonstrate the assumed relationship between the two realms (Levy 1988; De Mesquita; 2002: Putnam, 1988; and Fearon 1998) and outline the directions, stages, and outcomes of the interaction between these realms. These attempts have yielded sometimes complementary and other times contradictory results (Mack, 1975: 597).

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<sup>1</sup> Fearon (1998), in his analysis of domestic politics and foreign policy interaction, points out the increasing number of articles and books that more or less explicitly invoke domestic politics or domestic political factors in explanations of foreign policy choices. According to him more than one third of the articles in *International Organization* invoked domestic political factors as independent or intervening variables. He also listed some of the examples of studies which argued the significance of domestic political factors, including Huth (1996); Mesquita and Lalman (1992); Milner (1997); O'Halloran (1994) and Verdier (1994).

Among these different attempts, the diversionary theory of war has been one of the most cited and debated subfields of studies on domestic politics/ foreign policy interaction.

In its classical form, the diversionary theory states that a group's conflict with an external other is expected to bring internal coherence and unity to that particular group and divert the attention of the members of this group from domestic political issues to the foreign policy realm. Levy (1989), in his seminal review of the literature, which paved the way for a renaissance of studies on the diversionary theory, defined the theory as the "idea that political elites often embark on adventurous foreign policies or even resort to war in order to distract popular attention away from internal social and economic problems and consolidate their own domestic political support" (259). In fact, the theory argues that leaders are prone to starting wars and international conflicts in order to divert their population's attention away from their domestic failures (Bronson, 1997).<sup>2</sup>

Although scholars have only recently begun to systematically study the diversionary theory, the diversionary strategy has been used by policymakers and leaders for centuries. Recent studies on the diversionary theory of war reveal the ancient roots of its practice by leaders. For example, in a recent study, *Fear of Enemies and Collective Action*, Evrigenis (2008) demonstrated the use of diversionary strategies during the rivalry between Rome and Carthage. According to him, Marcus Porcius Cato, a prominent Roman statesman (also known as Cato the Younger), regardless of the agenda, concluded each and every speech in the Senate with the call that Carthage be destroyed. Evrigenis (2008) contended that, contrary to the popular belief that the in-group/out-group hypothesis is a recent sociological invention, the idea of *metus hostiles*, meaning that the fear of enemies promotes internal

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2 For the review of literature on domestic and external conflicts, see Kegley, Charles W., Neil R. Richardson, and Gunter Richter "Conflict at Home and Abroad: An Empirical Extension."; Stein, Arthur A. "Conflict and Cohesion: A Review of the Literature"; Mack, Andrew. 1975. "Numbers Are not Enough: A Critique of Internal and External Conflict Behavior Research"; Wilkenfeld, Jonathan. 1968. "Domestic and Foreign Conflict Behavior of Nations"; James, Patrick. "Conflict and Cohesion: A Review of the Literature and Recommendations for Future Research."

social unity, was a well-known phrase in Ancient Rome, and that in fact the use of diversionary force is part of a very long tradition which recognized the benefit and utility of conflict with external others (xi).

One can detect the traces of this long tradition by skimming through some major works on politics and interstate conflict written by scholars in different historical periods. For example, Jean Bodin stated centuries ago that “the best way of preserving a state and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion and civil war is to keep subjects in amity with one another and to this end, to find an enemy against whom they can make a common cause” (Cited in Stohl 1980: 297). In addition, George Blainey, in his seminal book, *The Causes of War*, pointed out a book on the Crimean War by Alexander William Kinglake, who was an observer of the war, as the first example of the use of the diversionary theory. In this book, Kinglake argued that “a major cause of the Crimean War was the internal troubles of the French regime. The invasion of Crimea was designed as a scapegoat to divert the eyes of the Frenchmen from their own government’s weakness” (Blainey, 1973; 72). The theory was also used extensively to explain the involvement of countries in armed conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most notably, Kaiser (1983), in his analysis of World War I, claimed that some members of the political elite in Germany were eager for war due to the rising social democratic movement in Germany. Kaiser contended that for these people, war was a suitable way to distract the attention of the public from domestic issues and to shift the focus of the German people to outside. According to Levy (1989), Lenin also viewed World War I as “an attempt by the imperialist classes to divert the attention of the laboring masses from the domestic political crisis and Marxist-Leninists argue more generally that imperialism and war are instruments by which the capitalist class secures its political position and guarantees its economic interests against revolutionary forces internal to the state” (259-260). But one of the most straightforward statements of diversionary intention was delivered by the Russian interior minister on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. Under the threat of a

revolution, the minister stated, “What this country needs is a short victorious war to stem the tide of revolution” (Levy, 1988).

Despite this long tradition of political leaders’ creation of international conflicts to divert the public’s attention from domestic problems, the systematic study of the strategy did not begin until the mid-1950s. It was George Simmel (1956) who approached the subject systematically for the first time in the mid-1950s with a study in which he argued that a conflict with an out-group increases the cohesion and political centralization of an in-group. He extended this sociological finding to international relations and suggested that “war with the outside is sometimes the last chance for a state ridden with inner antagonisms to overcome these antagonisms, or else to break up definitely” (Simmel, 1956). For Simmel, a political leader’s feelings of insecurity about his political survival may provoke his starting hostilities with an external group in order to trigger a rally effect within his own group and bolster his own group’s support of him (Levy and Thompson, 2010: 100).

Simmel’s in-group/out-group hypothesis was later revised by Coser (1956) who proffered that while externalization sometimes leads to group cohesion, other times it increases the antagonisms within a country. In his study, he listed several conditions that must exist in order for externalization to bring group unity and foster in-group cohesion. Levy (1989), in his review article, summarized the conditions as follows. Firstly, there must be an existing group that perceives itself as a group and has some minimal level of internal cohesion. Secondly, the group must consider the preservation of the group to be worthwhile and believe that the external threat is a threat to the in-group as a whole (261). According to Coser (1956), if these conditions do not exist, the external conflict may cause the disintegration rather than the integration of the group. These findings of Coser and Simmel were later confirmed by other scholars in the field and some even asserted that the in-group/out-group interaction is more than a relationship and it is almost a law. For instance, Dahrendorf (1968), in his

study *Class and Class Conflict*, stated, “It appears to be a general law that human groups react to external pressure by increased coherence” (58).

The findings of sociologists on in-group/out-group interactions, and especially Coser’s arguments, were picked up by students of international politics after a very brief period of time. For example, Haas and Whiting in their *Dynamics of International Relations*, stated that “statesmen may be driven to a policy of foreign conflict-if not open war- in order to defend themselves against the onslaught of domestic enemies” (1956: 62). Rosecrance also raised a similar argument in his *Action and Reaction in World Politics* and indicated the correlation between domestic conflict and international conflict. For him, one of the most significant causes of wars and international conflicts is the domestic insecurity of political elites (1963). In another study on wars, Quincy Wright described war as a “necessary and convenient means...to establish, maintain, or expand the power of a government, party, or class within a state.” According to him “by creating and perpetuating in the community both a fear of invasion and a hope of expansion, obedience to a ruler may be guaranteed...Rulers have forestalled internal sedition by starting external wars.” And moreover “there is no nation in which war or preparations of war have not to some degree or at some time been used as an instrument of national stability and order” (Cited in Tanter 1966: 42). In fact, in the early 1960s, it became commonplace for scholars to try to explain international conflicts with some form of domestic conflict.

Although the studies above welcomed and accepted the diversionary theory as a reasonable account of the initiation of wars and international conflicts, the behavioral revolution in social sciences and the increasing employment of quantitative methodologies in political science brought a new dimension to the study and analysis of the theory. The preliminary quantitative studies yielded contradictory findings on the question of the relationship between domestic and international conflict (Burrowes and Spectator, 1973; Wilkenfeld 1973). For instance, Rummel, who conducted

one of the earliest quantitative studies in this field, found no relationship between domestic and external conflict. In his research, he analyzed data for 77 states over the period of 1955-1957 and reached the conclusion that “foreign conflict behavior is generally completely unrelated to domestic conflict behavior” (1963: 24). A few years after this study, Tanter replicated Rummel’s study for a later period (1958 – 1960), and concluded that “there is a small relationship between 1958-1960 domestic and foreign conflict behavior” (1966, 51-62). Rummel, in a second study with a slightly different research design, found that there was “a positive association, albeit small, between domestic conflict behavior and the more belligerent forms of foreign conflict behavior” (1966: 101-102). In a later study, Wilkenfeld found a relationship between external and internal conflict behavior; there were changes however in the degree of this relationship depending on the nature of the state. According to him, “there is no particular relationship between any pair of internal and external conflict dimensions which holds for all groups equally well” (1968: 66). Wilkenfeld substantiated his results with two succeeding studies (Wilkenfeld and Zinnes, 1971 and Wilkenfeld, 1973).

In the mid-1970s, Hazlewood presented a new model to study the relationship between domestic and external conflict. In his model, instead of propounding a positive or negative relationship, he proffered a curvilinear relationship. In his conclusion, he stated that opposition and domestic conflict in a country can be diverted to the external realm up to a certain point, but “as threats to the incumbent elite become more severe, the utility of conflict management through diversion slowly decreases. Ultimately, the elites and their factions become so divided that the use of diversion mechanisms is no longer feasible. Once this threshold has been crossed, an inverse relationship between extreme elite instability and foreign conflict is likely to occur” (Hazlewood, 1975: 227). However, Hazlewood’s study was later challenged by other scholars, such as Kegley, who replicated

Wilkenfeld's study and argued that there was no or an insignificant relationship, between domestic and external conflict.

The quantitative studies of the diversionary theory that were conducted in the 1960s and the 1970s did not provide a cumulative and persuasive case for the diversionary theory. Levy (1989), in his review essay, criticized these quantitative studies as follows:

[T]here is still little convergence among the findings of different studies using different measures of internal and external conflict, different data sources, different temporal spans, and different statistical techniques. One fears that this mass of unstructured and often contradictory findings may be the artifact of particular data sets, measurement procedures, or statistical techniques.....It is generally agreed that a decade and half of a quantitative research on the relationship between the internal and external conflict behavior of states has failed to produce any cumulative results. We have a set of findings that are scattered and inconsistent, and these inconsistencies have yet to be resolved or explained. The failure of quantitative empirical research to uncover any indication of a strong relationship between the internal and external conflict behavior of states is disturbing for a number of reasons. It is in contrast with the empirical findings from other social science disciplines, which provides considerable evidence as to the validity of the conflict-cohesion hypothesis..... As Hazelwood (1975, 216) notes in developing a point made by Burrowes and Spectator (1973, 294-295), "in no other instance do the arguments present in international relations theory and the results recorded through systematic empirical analysis diverge so widely as in the domestic conflict- foreign conflict studies" (263).

For Levy and many others, the gap between theory and empirical research was disturbing because evidence from a large number of historical cases suggested that decisions in international conflicts were mostly influenced by the interests of domestic political elites who faced challenges to their political authority (263). The majority of the quantitative studies appeared to be driven by method and data availability instead of theory, and most of them were more concerned about replicating, confirming, or disconfirming Rummel's initial findings on the relationship of domestic and external conflict (266).

One of the most significant studies in the 1970s on the relationship between domestic and foreign policy was conducted by John Mueller. Unlike previous studies which were conducted cross-nationally, Mueller focused solely on US presidents and their use of force. In a 1970 article in the *American Political Science Review*, Mueller coined the term “rally round the flag” in order to explain the increase in presidential popularity during an external crisis. In his article (1970), and later in his book (1973), he underlined three conditions that need to be met to produce a rally phenomenon. For him, a rally point needs to be associated with an event which “(1) is international; (2) involves the United States and particularly the President directly; and (3) is specific, dramatic, and sharply focused” (1970: 21). According to Mueller, the event needs to be international in order to rally people around the flag of the president because domestic disturbances create more division than unification. In addition, the US needs to be directly involved in the international event in order to create a rally effect within the United States, because the American people are likely to find these events more relevant to them. Finally, for him, the international event needs to be specific, dramatic and sharply focused in order to capture the public's interest and attention. In the conclusion of his study on the relationship between public opinion and war during the Korean and the Vietnam War, Mueller stated that there was a “rally round the flag” effect, which he defined as a short-term boost to a president's popularity as a result of a dramatic international crisis (1973: 267).



The “rally round the flag” phenomenon was later studied extensively by scholars, including Kernell (1978) and Lee (1977). Most of these studies reached similar conclusions about the effects of specific, dramatic, and sharply focused international events on a president's public approval ratings, and they even went beyond this and expanded on the conditions that must be met for an international event to constitute a rallying point. For instance, Kernell (1978) argues that the international event needs to be on the front page of the newspapers for at least five consecutive days, which will guarantee widespread public awareness about the event (513). Lee, on the other hand, challenges some of Mueller’s assumptions and contends that not all international events that meet Mueller’s conditions creates identical rally effects. Instead, his study examines the impact of major international events on presidential popularity on a case-by-case basis in order to identify patterns in the public’s reaction to the President (1977: 252).<sup>3</sup> The studies of these scholars were later also challenged by others, including Blechman and Kaplan (1978) and Brody and Shapiro (1989), who casted doubt on the importance of the rally effect in explaining substantial variations in presidential popularity (Baker and Oneal, 2001).

Mueller’s studies in the 1970s started a new track in scholarship on the diversionary theory, which became the dominant school in a very short period of time. His study paved the way for the development of studies on the diversionary use of force by US presidents. While cross-national studies were prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s, by the 1980s, scholars, such as MacKuen (1983), Brody (1984), and Ostrom and Simons (1985) were presenting studies that focused on the rally effect and the relationship between foreign policy and domestic politics in the context of the United States and US presidents. The real breakthrough in studies on the US presidential use of force came with Ostrom and Job’s article in 1986.

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive review and evaluation of the arguments of Mueller, Kernell and Lee see Brody, Richard A. 1991. *Assessing the President: The Media, Elite Opinion, and Public Support*.

In their article *Presidents and Political Use of Force*, Ostrom and Job (1986) evaluated different explanations for presidential use of force and compared the domestic and international sources of using force. They found that, contrary to the claims of neorealists, international factors are less important than some domestic factors, including the economy and the president's standing in public opinion polls. Ostrom and Job's article not only challenged the neorealist premises and presented new questions about the interaction between foreign policy and domestic politics, but it also started a new debate about the political use of force by the US presidents. Almost all of the studies that emerged in the 1990s and focused on the presidential use of force, including James and Hristoulas (1994), Hess and Orphanides (1995), Meernik (1994), Meernik and Waterman (1996), Lian and Oneal (1993), DeRouen (1995), Gowa (1998), Prins (1999), Baker (1999), and DeRouen and Peake (2002), in one way or another, aimed to respond to the findings or replicate the tests of Ostrom and Job.

In one of the early tests of Ostrom and Job's study, James and Oneal reexamined their argument by introducing a new indicator, namely a measure of the severity of ongoing international crises. They reached a similar conclusion to Ostrom and Job. They asserted that domestic political factors are the most consequential factors in presidential use of force (1991). However, Ostrom and Job and James and Oneal were later challenged by Meernik who argued that international conditions have a greater effect than domestic conditions on the presidential decision to use force abroad. His results indicated that "when balancing domestic and international conditions, presidents' decisions are more often motivated by national interest than personal political gain" (1994: 136). In addition to these two schools, a third group of scholars that included James and Hristoulas (1994) claimed the interdependence of domestic and international factors. James and Hristoulas found that "significant internal influences, with potential cross-national relevance, include explicit forms of behavior by the public, perceptions of international tension and public approval of the president. At the external

level, the gravity and importance of crises underway in the system affect its receptiveness to activity by the United States” (1994: 327).

While the debate over the nature of the interaction between domestic politics and foreign policy was proceeding, some scholars, including DeRouen (1995), Hess and Orphanides (1995) and Fordham (1998), attempted to reach a more accurate description of the domestic factors that influence the use of force in the US. Although they failed to reach a consensus, they detected several potentially overlapping causes of diversionary behavior (Pickering and Kisangani, 2005: 24). One of the most tested and debated causes of diversionary behavior has been the economy and economic problems of a country. After the early studies on the effect of economic problems on presidential use of force, including Ostrom and Job (1986), Russett (1990) and James (1988), these studies began focusing on identifying the extent and nature of this relationship. Some of them found a fairly straightforward relationship between economic problems and the external use of force, whereas others described the relationship as being more indirect. For example, Fordham argued that there is a direct relationship between economic conditions and the presidential use of force (1998), whereas for DeRouen, this relationship is an indirect one. He stated that “there is a significant direct linkage between the economy and presidential approval, a nonrecursive linkage between presidential approval and force, and indirect linkage between the economy, presidential approval and uses of force. There does not appear to be a direct link between the economy and the use of force” (1995: 689). In a later study, DeRouen and Peake underlined this indirect effect and argued that “uses of force by the president have a notable agenda-setting effect, shifting public attention away from the economy. The shift in attention also causes a long-term effect on the president's public-approval rating” (2002). Hess and Orphanides also contributed to this debate by developing and testing an economic theory of the use of force that links the election cycle, war decisions, and economic performance. According to them, “the probability of conflict initiation or escalation exceeds 60 percent in years in which a president is

up for reelection and the economy is doing poorly” (1995: 841). Wang also reached similar conclusions; however, he also added Congressional support as a variable. For Wang, the electoral cycle, economic difficulties, and presidential support in Congress affect crisis decision making. Wang stated, “Once involved in a crisis, presidents select more intense responses when the economy is doing badly, when they are in the later stages of the electoral cycle, and when their general support in the Congress, at least in terms of party membership, is high” (1996: 92).

The debate about domestic factors in U.S. Presidents’ use of force later became more specific as scholars started to investigate specific issues within the economy that might increase the probability of the use of force. Some scholars, such as DeRouen (2000), Fordham (1998a) and Fordham (1998b), demonstrated that unemployment in the US could provide an important incentive for US presidents to use force against an external other. For instance, Fordham, in his study (1998a), indicated high unemployment and a president’s re-election years as the most significant causes of external use of force. DeRouen, in his study, also confirmed the positive relationship between unemployment and external use of force (2000). In another study, Fordham (1998b) took into account party differences and demonstrated that Republican presidents’ use of force was positively correlated with high unemployment, whereas Democratic presidents’ use of force was positively correlated with high inflation.

In addition to embarking on this quest for an explanation of diversionary behavior, scholars identified new intervening variables that might increase or decrease the level of the rally effect in the US during and after an international event. For instance, Lian and Oneal found that a rally effect is only likely when the foreign policy action is reported prominently by the media. Lian and Oneal also suggested some other conditions for higher rally effects, including bipartisan support for the president and a low level of popularity of the president. In addition, according to them, in order to

have a higher boost in approval rates, the country should not be at war during the diversionary use of force and the society should not be fatigued by war (1993). Oneal, in another study with Anna Bryan, looked more specifically at the impact of media on the rallying effect. According to them, “the greatest influences on the rallying effect of a crisis is whether or not the United States is involved in an ongoing war, and especially the *New York Times’s* coverage of the president’s major response to a crisis.” They argue that when the message of the president is covered in the headlines, the rallying effect is 8 percentage points greater than when it is not reported on the front page (1995: 379). Oneal, in a more recent study with Baker, found that although the public does not automatically respond favorably and rally behind the president after his use of force, when the White House actively tries to draw attention to the international conflict, the likelihood of a rally effect increases. Oneal and Baker stated, “for example, if the president personally makes a statement regarding the situation- thereby making it more likely that the conflict will be prominently featured on the front page of the New York Times- he can expect to increase the rally by about 2%” (2001: 683). Recently, Rottinghaus and Tedin (2010) also emphasized the influence of the media tone and coverage both on the magnitude of the rally effect and its duration.

The academic revival in the field of diversionary use of force in the 1990s after Ostrom and Job’s 1986 piece coincided with the increasing number of military operations by the US government during these years. The Bush administration’s military operations in Panama and *Operation Desert Shield* and *Operation Desert Storm* against Iraq fostered a public debate about the use of force for domestic political ends by US presidents. The military operations against Panama were especially controversial in terms of their timing and goal. Many in the US and around the world interpreted the invasion into Panama as a form of diversionary war and argued that it was motivated by a need to solve “domestic political problems” rather than to achieve strategic goals (Cramer, 2004a; 2004b; 2006). In addition, although strongly denied by President Bush and Vice President Quayle, several

analysts and journalists linked the war in Iraq with the budget deficit and the savings and loan scandal in the United States (Oresek 1990; Mintz 1993; Lian and Oneal, 1993: 278). Even after the Gulf War, there were some expectations of another attack against Iraq to provide a longer rally effect that could bring victory for the Bush administration in his reelection campaign. In fact, just before the Republican National Convention, the *New York Times* reported that the Bush administration was planning another raid on Iraq to boost the president's campaign for reelection (Tyler, 1992). Clinton's presidency and the political events, including the White House sex scandal, the impeachment debates and subsequent military strikes on Afghanistan, Sudan and Serbia, further intensified the use and circulation of the diversionary theory of war and bolstered the event-driven nature of political science research and intensified studies on diversionary strategies and wars (Hansen, 2004; Hendrickson, 2002).

However, these political developments did not mark an end to the discrepancies between the findings of case studies and quantitative analyses. For example, amid the wide circulation of the idea of diversionary use of force by US presidents during the Clinton era, scholars like Meernik and Waterman (1996) rejected these claims and asserted the significance of other factors in presidential use of force. In their article *The Myth of Diversionary Use of Force*, they identified several important problems with the literature including the absence of any direct link between domestic political conditions in the United States and uses of force or international crises (1996: 573). According to them, it is more likely that a president is compelled to act on the basis of national interest or in accordance with the United States' responsibilities as a superpower (589). Several other scholars reached similar conclusions and asserted that international variables and external factors are more important in the use of force by US presidents than domestic factors (Meernik, 1994; 2001; Gowa, 1998; Moore and Lanoue, 2003). For example, Moore and Lanoue argued that international politics, not domestic politics, was the primary determinant of the US's use of force during the Cold War era.

According to them, previous studies in this field were mistaken, mainly because of their inconsideration of the hostility of other countries towards the United States (2003, 376-392). In addition to this, Gowa (1998) indicated that “neither political-military cycles nor partisan politics have had any observable effect on US recourse to force abroad between 1870-1992” (320). Some other scholars in this field also continued to respond and to replicate the studies of Ostrom and Job (1986) and in that context, refute the claims of interaction between domestic politics and foreign policy. Meernik (2001) and Mitchell and Moore (2002) authored two of those studies, which negated the significance of domestic factors in the presidential use of force and indicated the existence and significance of some other variables. The findings of these scholars were later challenged and revised by scholars like Fordham who modified some of Gowa’s arguments and suggested that “Gowa’s conclusions should be amended to consider the influence of economic conditions on the use of force, something that was not evident in her empirical results” (2002: 593).

Contrary to the findings of these quantitative large-n studies, qualitative political and historical studies indicated a form of relationship between domestic problems and international conflicts. Earlier historical studies conducted by historians and political scientists revealed the instrumental use of force by some presidents for domestic ends. Among those, historian Frank Kofsky, in his study on Truman, contended that President Truman fabricated a Soviet threat towards the West in order to get Congressional support for his policies (1995). William F. Mabe and Jack S. Levy, in their research on the United States’ role in the Quasi-War of 1798 and the War of 1812, analyzed the opposition to war during the diversionary use of force by US presidents (1999). In addition, some other qualitative studies on the use of force by George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton have contributed to the methodological discussions in the field. In his piece on Clinton’s military strikes in 1998, Ryan Hendrickson put forward four propositions in order to set some standards to qualitatively evaluate the validity of the claims about the diversionary nature of these attacks,

including the president's relationship with his advisors and with the opposition in Congress. Later, Cramer, in her study of the US invasion of Panama, tried to improve and refine these standards. Both of these researchers tried to develop a standard qualitative method for assessing the possibility of diversionary uses of force in two different American military actions (2004a; 2004b; 2005). Despite these researchers' US-centric orientation, their research made important strides in shaking up the hegemony of the use of quantitative methodologies in the field.

In these years, another group of scholars started to ask new questions about the variables and the earlier studies and came up with new research designs. Some of these studies were early attempts to modify the theory, mostly in accordance with Levy's suggestions in his review essay (1989). They tried to refine the concept of "rallying" and to respond to some of the questions regarding the nature and identity of the "ralliers." For instance, Morgan and Bickers, in their study, discussed the idea of the "in-group" and came up with some conditions for the emergence of a diversionary tendency on the part of political leaders. They argued that "a state leader will treat an erosion of domestic support more seriously when it comes from within segments of society that are critical in the maintenance of the leader's ruling coalition than when it comes from other domestic groups" (1992: 25). James and Rioux, in their analysis, also challenged the assumption of unitary public reaction and discovered that different sections of the US electorate respond differently to the presidential use of force. For them, the president's "ruling coalition," as well as independent voters rally around the president, but the opposition party voters usually do not rally around the president in response to the president's external use of force. James and Rioux also found that it is the level of the force that determines the extent of the rally effect. They argued that "a potential rally effect is sensitive to the actual use of force. If force is used, then any rally effect disappears and the presidents may even suffer a loss at the polls if the use of force is great enough" (1998, 801). Furthermore, Baum, in his analysis, tried to paint a clearer picture of the "rally round the flag"



phenomenon and proffered a more nuanced explanation. According to him, in response to a foreign policy action intended to rally the population, those who are closest to the point of ambivalence between approval and disapproval are most likely to change their opinion. He also discovered some other differences between Republicans and Democrats in terms of rallying. For him:

First, Republican presidents typically enjoy larger rallies than Democrats following a use of force abroad. But this is not necessarily because Republicans are, or are perceived to be, better stewards of foreign policy. Rather, the true explanations for this difference appear to be greater political awareness-and hence ideological constraint-of average Republicans. Highly educated respondents are least likely to rally. And these respondents are more likely to be Republicans than Democrats. Conversely, moderately aware individuals...are most likely to rally and are more likely to be Democrats than Republicans. It is therefore unsurprising that a majority of the relationships reported above were strongest during Republican administration.

Secondly, both Democrats and Republicans are most likely to rally behind a president of the opposition party. In fact, the exception to the previously noted pattern of a stronger relationship during Republican administrations consisted of Republican identifiers rallying behind a Democratic president during times of high inflation...

Third, divided government appears to work to a president's advantage, at least in terms of maximizing the rally effect among the opposition identifiers. Once again, the explanation for this surprising pattern lies in the relatively low pre-rally approval ratings for presidents confronting Congresses controlled by the opposition party, combined with the relatively greater media coverage of opposition party statements

in support of the president when foreign crises arise during the divided government (2002: 288-289).

The 9/11 attacks against the United States and the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq also contributed to the extension and diversification of literature on the “rally round the flag” phenomenon. Particularly, 9/11 and its aftermath, including the skyrocketing approval rates of President Bush and Mayor Giuliani, were examined by scholars (Feinstein, 2010; Landau et al., 2004; Gaines, 2002; Schubert et al 2002). Some of these studies confirmed certain dimensions of earlier studies on the “rally round the flag” phenomenon. For instance, Schubert et al, found in their experimental study that the president’s keynote speech on a certain foreign policy action is more significant than any other factor in the yielding of a rally effect. For them, Bush’s September 11<sup>th</sup> speech was the most critical factor in producing this rally effect in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 (2002). In another study, Gaines argued that the 9/11 rally effect was different than any other foreign policy-related “rally round the flag” phenomenon in American history. According to him, 9/11 and its aftermath demonstrated that the rally effect can last for a lengthy period of time. He stated that “the American public continues to rally around the president eight months after a few tragically efficient terrorists shocked the nation. The rally has been long-lived and somewhat deep, insofar as it seems to encompass the Cabinet, and maybe even Congress, albeit in a much muted form” (2002: 535).

Recently, scholars have also started to raise some questions about Congress and its function and role during the diversionary foreign policy process. For instance, Brule’s study, entitled *US Congress and Presidential Use of Force*, demonstrated that although Congress has the ability to exact serious limitations on the president’s use force, “when the economy is deteriorating, such constraints appear to compel the president to demonstrate his leadership skills in the foreign policy arena. The

President's efforts to demonstrate his competence seem to be coupled with a readiness to support US threats and promises with military force, resulting in a greater likelihood of forceful dispute initiations." He argued that "the president is more likely to use force in response to economic decline when facing an opposition in Congress than during years in which he enjoys partisan support in the legislature" (2006: 464, 479). Later, this study was challenged by scholars, such as Howell and Peavehouse, who argued that Congress plays an important role in the presidential use of force. According to this work, presidents are less likely to exercise military force when their opponents have control of Congress (2007). In fact, "as partisan support within Congress increases, presidents engage in military initiatives more and more often; but as support within Congress wanes so does the frequency with which presidents exercise their authority to use military force abroad" (2002: 2).

In addition to investigating the impact of the US Congress and domestic institutions, scholars of the diversionary theory of war have also investigated the effect of international support on, and the role of international organizations in, the instrumental use of force by the US presidents. Chapman and Reiter, in their study on the "rally round the flag" effect, probed the influence of the support of the United Nations Security Council on the rally effect. In this study, they found that when "proposed uses of force attract the support of the United Nations Security Council, the rally in support of the American president increases significantly" (2004: 886).

Although the US presidential use of force has dominated diversionary scholarship, recently scholars started to test this theory in countries other than the United States. In the diversionary literature, one of the most convincing non-US cases has been the Argentinean invasion of the Falkland Islands. According to many observers, Argentinean aggression was a result of the domestic economic and political crises in Argentina at the time (Hasting and Jenkins, 1983; Lebow, 1985). More subtle analyses of the conflict by Vakili and Levy (1992) and later by Oakes (2006) reached similar

conclusions about the diversionary motives of Argentinean leaders. Vakili and Levy focused on the intra-military conflict whereas Oakes introduced some other variables, including low state extractive capacity as an explanation of the diversionary nature of the conflict. Even more interestingly, some scholars explained the British reaction to the Argentinean invasion of the Falkland Islands with the diversionary theory. Hasting and Jenkins (1983) and Lebow (1985) argued that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher decided to go to war with Argentina, over an island that had no economic or strategic importance to Britain, after considering the domestic benefits for her leadership. The diversionary motivations of the British leaders were later studied more extensively by scholars, such as Morgan and Anderson and Lai and Reiter. For instance, Morgan and Anderson, in their attempt to test the applicability of diversionary theory in the context of the UK, found that the level of public support for the British government in the time period of 1950-1992 was associated with the probability of Britain displaying or using force abroad (1999). Lai and Reiter later extended these findings to cover the time period of 1948 to 2001, and reached a parallel but a more detailed conclusion about the “rally round the flag” effect (2005).

Recently, scholars have also tried to extend the temporal domain of the diversionary use of force and apply the theory to more historical cases, such as the foreign policies of states during World War I (James, 1987), and the politics of Italian city-states (Sobek, 2007). Other spatial extensions of diversionary studies include Ye’s study of China’s use of force between 1978 and 1992 (2002), Vengroff’s work on Africa (1980), Pickering and Kissangani’s research on Rwanda (2005), and Mambo and Schoefield’s study on Tanzania (2005: 2007). Even more recently, scholars have increasingly looked into the use of military force in domestic politics for diversionary purposes. For example, Tir and Jasinski showed that the embattled leader of a country can elicit domestic support by using armed force against an ethnic minority group within its borders. They called this domestic

diversion and suggested that it is a less costly and risky method than other forms of externalization (2008, 2009).

Finally, scholars of Middle East studies often refer to the diversionary intention of political leaders in order to explain some critical foreign policy decisions of the leaders in this region. Diplomatic historians and political observers have especially stressed the political use of force by Arab and Israeli leaders in this region. Most of these scholars argued that the conflict-prone nature of the region is partly a result of the political use of force by Middle Eastern leaders. When confronted with an economic crisis or high levels of social instability, these leaders blame some external entities for their failures. Fouad Ajami, in his book on Arab predicament, cites an article by an Arab intellectual who points out this characteristic in Arab leaders. Ajami says the following of the Arab intellectual's observations:

He noted the tendency among Arab officials, spokesmen, and even some critics to lay the blame for defeat elsewhere instead of accepting responsibility. Some were quick to explain away the defeat by pointing American and British participation in the war. Others went further and accused the USSR of plotting the Arab defeat. Finally there were those who declared it was Allah's will (1992: 39).

More recently, experts of Middle Eastern politics have expressed the significance of taking into account the diversionary maneuvers of Middle Eastern leaders in order to reach a meaningful peace in the region. For example, Martin Indyk and the Richard Haas stressed the importance of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in order to prevent the diversionary aggressions of the Middle Eastern leaders towards Israel. They argued that the "failure to resolve the Palestinian issue provides these leaders with an excellent excuse for diverting the attention of their people from their own shortcomings" and scapegoat the State of Israel for their failures (2008: 25). However, despite this

general assumption that the Middle Eastern leaders frequently employ diversionary strategies in order to stay in power in these countries, the diversionary theory has not been utilized well in the field of Middle Eastern studies. The journalistic accounts and the limited number of case studies have been insufficient to constitute cumulative knowledge in the field and to contribute significantly to the theoretical advancement of the diversionary theory of war.<sup>4</sup>

### **Theoretical Reformulations**

Before analyzing the relationship between leadership traits and the selection of different diversionary strategies, this dissertation aims to revise and refine some basic premises of the classical diversionary theory of war. One of the most significant contributions of this research will be its attempt to rescue the diversionary theory from war. It will be argued that the diversionary theory can be used to explain more than just war and the use of force. Various presidential dramas, including summits, peacemaking ventures, and foreign trips can also be parts of a broader strategy of political leaders to

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<sup>4</sup> Some of the premises of diversionary theory have been utilized to explain conflicts in the Middle East, especially those between Arab states and Israel, though not in a very systematic manner. Among those, Dawisha argues that during the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein constantly blamed Persians in order to unify his people and overcome religious differences within its borders (2002). In addition, Demir, in his analysis of Turkish politics, explores the use of diversionary aggression by the leaders of Turkey during domestic political conflicts. In a similar way, Tsakonas, in his study of Turkey's foreign policy, projects possible future aggression by Turkey against Greece and Cyprus in order to divert attention away from political unrest during the implementation of the Copenhagen Criteria (2001). Other prominent examples in this field include Nasser's aggressive policies in 1967 when he was facing a possible coup (James 2005; Mor 1991) and Anwar Sadat's attack on Israel when the economy of Egypt was experiencing major setbacks (Stein, 1985; Rabinovich, 2004; Israeli, 1985). In some instances, Israeli aggression in the region against the Arab states was also interpreted as an attempt by Israeli policymakers to divert attention from Israel's own economic and social problems. For example, Cashman and Robinson argue that "as early as 1964 the Israeli government began purposefully to pursue policies that were designed to antagonize the Arab states in order to induce a diversionary war" (2007: 179-180). Later other scholars also investigated this link between Israeli domestic politics and foreign policy and claimed the existence of correlations between elections and the use of force (Barzilai and Russet, 1990) and between the frequency of Israeli demonstrations and Israeli limited military attacks (Sprecher and DeRouen, 2002). These arguments were later refined and revised by scholars including Kuperman (2003) and D'Abramo (2005). D'Abramo in his study argues that "although most Israeli responses to Palestinian terrorism follow a strategy of tit-for-tat, there have been instances in which Israeli leaders have altered their policies prior to an election, using force to increase public support and create diversionary effect" (2005: 3).

divert the attention of their domestic public. Taking into account these less risky and less costly foreign policy endeavors will also help us to question an implicit assumption in the literature - US exceptionalism. The diversionary theory focuses predominantly on presidential use of force and because it focuses on this particular diversionary tactic, which is risky and costly, it assumes that only US presidents can afford to use foreign policy to divert the public's attention from domestic problems. However, the inclusion of some other diversionary mechanisms in the analysis of the diversionary theory will demonstrate that the leaders of not-so-great powers also try to divert the attention of their publics with their foreign policies. Hence, these revisions will acknowledge the diversionary theory as a theory of foreign policy, rather than solely a theory of war. After making these modifications to the theory, I will focus on the role of a leader's leadership traits in the selection of different diversionary mechanisms, which will provide an individualistic approach to diversionary studies and bring the decision-maker back into the diversionary theory.

This dissertation will also contribute to overcoming some of the theoretical and methodological limitations of diversionary studies and expand upon the literature by raising new questions. It will be part of the cumulative knowledge on diversionary studies by building on previous empirical findings. In order to achieve these goals and in order to generate a new approach toward analyzing diversionary behavior of states, different islands of theories are going to be integrated with diversionary scholarship in this dissertation. It will focus and revise the mainstream dependent and independent variables and also broaden the scope of diversionary studies by taking into account states other than the great powers and bringing the decision-makers back in. In the remainder of this section, the aforementioned propositions will be discussed at length and in depth.

### **Diversiory Theory of Foreign Policy?**

The diversionary theory of war literature has been known as a theory of war and international conflict that links domestic problems and conflicts within a country with international disputes. Scholars have for many years investigated diversionary motivations of leaders in times of violent external conflicts and wars. However, there have been several drawbacks to this premise. The theory in its traditional version considers violent externalization as the only possible tool for a political leader to divert the attention of his/her domestic public. This means that a leader can only deflect the attention of its population through declaring war or using force against an external foe or enemy. Despite the findings elicited in public opinion literature regarding the rally effect of other forms of foreign policy actions, most scholars have failed to integrate these different findings with diversionary scholarship to form a more comprehensive theory of diversion. The rare studies that have aimed to examine the use of more cooperative foreign policy strategies, and those that have focused on conflictual foreign policy attitudes short of war, have remained marginal.<sup>5</sup> In this study, I aim to take into account both cooperative and conflictual uses of foreign policy for domestic diversionary purposes.

Since the inception of systematic scholarship on the diversionary theory, there has been a pseudo-consensus that external use of force is the dependent variable in studies, even though there have been constant debates and discussions about the independent variables. The idea of diverting the attention of the domestic public has been almost identified with the external use of force and the launching of an international conflict. This consensus in the literature has resulted in the extensive use of datasets on wars and violent conflicts, such as the *Militarized Interstate Dispute* dataset, which was compiled by the Correlates of War Project developed by Jones, Bremer and Singer (1996).

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<sup>5</sup> Ann Rivlin's doctoral dissertation, "Diversionary Foreign Policy?" (2008), is a recent example of these studies that take into account diversion with cooperative foreign policy gestures.



An early assessment of the dependent variable of diversionary studies was made by Joe Hagan in 1986. Hagan, in his study, argued that the leaders of countries with domestic problems can act assertively to divert attention away from domestic issues and enhance the image of their regimes. However, these leaders also show some restraint in order to avoid costly military and economic reactions by foreign actors, and may prefer diversionary policies other than war. Two years after this preliminary suggestion, Levy raised this issue in his seminal review of the literature (1989). After criticizing a lack of attention to the nature of the dependent variable, Levy emphasized the need to also focus on actions of externalization short of war. For Levy, these “actions short of war are generally more cost-effective in achieving the desired internal effect than an actual war” (1989: 281). Later, during the 1990s, Morgan and Bickers (1992) also stressed the need to extend the dependent variable to include other foreign policy actions. According to them:

We should not assume...that leaders faced with domestic turmoil will choose to initiate war as a diversionary tactic. Lower levels of hostile actions, such as threats to use force, shows of force, and uses of force short of war may be adequate to create the perception of a foreign threat, are less costly and less risky, and may actually be more effective at increasing domestic cohesion...Lower levels of foreign aggressiveness may be preferred as a means of rallying domestic support. (1992: 32)

In this study, they go so far as to highlight the possibility of using more positive foreign policy actions, such as entering into peace talks or negotiating over arms limitations agreements (1992: 35). This idea was repeated by Richards, Morgan, Wilson, Schwebach and Young (1993) who stated that “it may be possible for a leader to accomplish the goals of diversion through other types of actions, such as highly visible, cooperative foreign policies” (529). In addition, Heldt, in his review essay (1995), once again opens the discussion on dependent variables and points out the reviving of

interest “among researchers in examining whether states become more externally aggressive rather than actually turn to the use- rather than just threats- of actual armed force” (104).

In more recent studies, scholars including Ann Rivlin have started to challenge the predominant view in diversionary scholarship and argued that, in terms of US foreign policy, the president can rally people as the commander-in-chief and also as a peacemaker or a diplomatic giant. Rivlin, in her study, states:

Scholars promoting a diversionary theory of war have argued incorrectly that the only role the president has that can sway public opinion is the role of commander in chief. Diversionary theory, first discussed by Kinglake during the Crimean War and since then examined by such scholars as Levy and DeRouen, takes as its base the idea that leaders adopt conflictual foreign policies to divert the attention of the public away from domestic problems. In its original articulation, the theory looks only at instances of political leaders starting a war. While scholars investigating this theory are correct that the president utilizing military troops potentially could result in a rallying of the population, they mistakenly ignore other roles the president can use to his advantage. In particular, it is possible that the position of the president as the chief diplomat and as the voice of the government to the people also can be utilized by the president to boost public opinion. Both these roles carry with them media attention and symbolic appeal and tend to be associated with non-conflictual activities such as speeches, trips, and negotiations. (2008: 8)

In fact, many scholars have noted that leaders often perceive foreign affairs as an area where they have relatively greater autonomy compared to domestic politics (Berthoud and Brady, 2001).

Scholars like Wildavsky have argued that the leaders of countries have greater room for action in

terms of foreign policy for several reasons, including the need for rapid action in foreign policy-related issues and the presence of an uninformed public. They have further suggested that when leaders are constrained in domestic politics, they will turn to foreign policy in order to present themselves as active executives (Wildavsky, 1991; Fishback, 2005). In addition, the relative lack of access of the members of the opposition parties to foreign policy decision-making processes provides leaders with more independence in the foreign policy realm. The meetings and negotiations with foreign leaders and the constant flow of information to the executive branch from the foreign policy bureaucracy help the leader and the government to sustain a large information gap with the public and the opposition during their term in office. Particularly since the end of the World War II, with the advent of increasing diplomatic relations due to technological advancements in communication and transportation and changes in the nature of international relations, the role of the leader as the main foreign policy decision-maker of a country has become much more obvious and autonomous.

In the context of the US presidency, scholars like Marra, Ostrom, and Simon have explained this autonomy with the rights and guarantees that are provided to the president by the US Constitution. They state that the branches of the US government have created a “foreign policy leader role” that provides the president with more room for maneuvers and unilateral action than do the roles of manager of economics and domestic policy initiator (Marra, Ostrom and Simon, 1990: 591-592). They argue that, in terms of economic issues, in most instances, the president needs the approval and support of Congress, which has the power of the purse and which has jurisdiction over the major components of fiscal policy. Moreover, domestic program initiation also demands considerable endorsement and approval from Congress. However, presidents have a wider scope of authority in foreign policy, including with regard to using military force, travelling to a summit or concluding an executive agreement (Marra et. al 1990: 591-592). Marra, Ostrom and Simon also

underline several examples of Supreme Court decisions and constitutional guarantees that give the US president a great deal of autonomy in foreign policy decision-making and implementation. For them, since the FDR administration, the decisions of the Supreme Court and Congress have institutionalized a unique role for the president in foreign and military policy. For example:

'The Supreme Court declared the president to be the sole organ of the federal government in the field of international relations, who could exercise authority which did not depend upon the affirmative grants of the Constitution. Moreover, throughout the modern era, the judicial system has been most reluctant to rule against presidential exercises of authority in foreign and military affairs... 'Thus the judicial system has been instrumental in establishing and maintaining the president's ability to act unilaterally in foreign affairs. (Marra, Ostrom, and Simon: 591)

In addition, Marra et al argue that developments in technology and telecommunication in the modern era have provided opportunities for the president to become more international and to engage more regularly in foreign affairs. These developments have increased presidents' opportunities to travel and to dispatch US forces abroad as well as the ability of presidents to convey foreign policy-related messages to the domestic public. Moreover, the increasing US involvement in world politics and the entry of the US into military and economic alliances since the end of World War II have provided more opportunities for presidents to engage in high-level diplomacy. (Marra et al., 1990: 592) Hess described this new situation of the presidency as follows:

'The President now devotes a larger part of his time to foreign policy, perhaps as much as two-thirds. This is true even if his pre-presidential interests had been mainly in the domestic area. He takes trips abroad, attends summit meetings, greets heads of state at the White House. Like Kennedy, he believes that "the big difference"

between domestic and foreign policy "is that between a bill being defeated and the country [being] wiped out." But he also turns to foreign policy because it is the area in which he has the most authority to act and, until recently, the least public and congressional restraint on his actions. Moreover, history usually rewards the foreign-policy President, and the longer a President stays in office, the larger in his mind looms his "place in history." (1977: 45)

For many scholars, foreign policy not only provides more freedom to a leader in terms of decision-making, but also provides a better means of gaining public support than domestic political issues. Previous studies on the nexus of public opinion and a president's foreign policy have demonstrated that an achievement in foreign policy has a more positive impact on the approval rates of the presidents than an achievement in domestic politics. For example, in his study on US presidents, Lowi gives the example of Reagan's presidency to show the effect of foreign policy on approval rate. He states:

Note well that as the economy moving upward at a smooth albeit impressive rate, President Reagan's approval profile was developing in a more jagged fashion. The six point jump in May 1983 can not be laid beside a specific domestic economic development, but it can be understood as a fairly immediate response to the violent initiation of the United States into the Lebanese conflict...It should be recalled that the Lebanon crisis was in an important sense a culmination, perhaps even a confirmation, of President Reagan's effort to mobilize the American people around fear of East-West conflict, an effort begun with the "evil-empire" speech of February and carried even further in March with his famous "star wars" address to Congress. (Lowi, 1985: 16-17)

In this relatively autonomous foreign policy sphere, a leader usually has more than just one policy option to use for domestic purposes. Foreign policy provides the decision-maker a set of alternative modes of responses, which he or she can use in different circumstances (Most and Starr, 1989; Starr, 2000). The leader, depending on his preferences, constraints, and opportunities, can select or prioritize one of these policy actions in one instance and another in another instance (Clark and Reed, 2005). Most and Starr described this foreign policy substitutability by raising two issues. First of all, they argued that “through time and across space, similar factors could be plausibly be expected to trigger different foreign policy acts” (1989: 383) and secondly, “different processes could plausibly be expected to lead similar results” (ibid). According to them, “if foreign policies can indeed be alternative routes by which decision makers attain their goals, then it would seem plausible that decision makers who are confronted with some problem or subjected to some stimulus could, under at least certain conditions, substitute one such means for another” (1989: 387). In fact, a problem that causes a particular foreign policy response in one instance, at a different time may result in another distinct behavior. As Bennett and Nordstrom indicated, if the same cause can lead to different policy choices, then the mainstream linear approach to testing becomes difficult “since it assumes that a given cause will always lead to a particular single outcome” (2000: 33). If a leader of a country is motivated to achieve a specific goal, then there may be several different policies that will help the leader to attain that goal (Bennett and Nordstrom: 34), and neglecting these other paths may limit the options of the leader (Palmer and Bhandari, 2000). Considering this substitutability in foreign policy, as de Mesquita argues, it is shortsighted to assume that a leader will externalize in a consistently similar fashion in response to domestic problems instead of considering other possible policy choices (1985: 130).

An innovative initial attempt to take into account foreign policy substitutability in the context of a leader using foreign policy to divert the domestic public’s attention from internal economic

problems was made by Bennett and Nordstrom (2000). Although they did not directly deal in their studies with the different options available to leaders to divert the attention of their populations, Bennett and Nordstrom emphasized the availability of multiple foreign policy options in response to domestic conditions. According to them, a state involved in an international conflict may react to emerging domestic economic problems by either escalating the conflict in order to divert the public's attention from the economic problems or seeking to settle the rivalry to free up resources. In both instances, a leader can relieve himself from the pressure that he faces in the domestic realm (2000). Later, scholars like Clark also underlined the existence of multiple means of diversion for political leaders facing domestic problems; however, they did not provide a comprehensive and systematic study of this idea. For instance Clark, in his study, states:

The notion that leaders have incentives to turn to military adventurism in the face of domestic adversity fails to recognize other policy tools those leaders can invoke with less risk and greater chances of success. Moreover it ignores the extent to which domestic political institutions restrain executive entrepreneurialism. (2001: 637)

In this study, I take into account these arguments by scholars of foreign policy and aim to integrate the notion of foreign policy substitutability with the diversionary theory of war. Such integration is possible by taking into account policy options other than war or use of force for leaders who aim to deflect the attention of the domestic public. In the remainder of this section, I will enumerate some other strategies and methods that leaders can use in order to divert the attention of their domestic constituencies.

Empirical studies in the field of foreign policy have revealed that leaders usually make a cost-benefit analysis before making a foreign policy decision and usually prefer less costly and less risky foreign policy strategies. Due to their high cost and risk, war and other uses of force may not be the first

preference of a political leader, particularly in a country facing economic problems and where leader needs the approval of the legislature in order to declare war. In such circumstances, it may be difficult for a political leader to engage in such an action for the sake of his political survival and regardless of the national interest. Furthermore, to launch a military attack or start a war requires more time and responsibility than other possible foreign policy options. The tasks that are involved in launching a military attack or starting a war include but are not limited to strategic planning by the defense department, scheduling the attacks, transporting combat units, and preparing logistical and physical support for the troops. Moreover, instead of a short, decisive victory, war may be prolonged and become a quagmire for the president. Because of these risks, before using force, the leader of a country may be willing to consider other policy options, including threats to use force and shows of force, such as military parades and maneuvers. There are numerous examples of these types of foreign policy actions that are interpreted as diversionary in nature by international observers and analysts, including China's massive military exercise in the Taiwan Strait, which was interpreted as a way to stoke nationalism to divert attention from China's domestic problems, such as unemployment (*The Strait Times*, 2001), the anti-India statements of Pakistani officials and anti-Pakistani statements of Indian officials before and during elections (*The Independent* 1999), Ariel Sharon's constant threats to Lebanon (BBC Monitoring, 2002) and Armenia's temporary violations of the ceasefire on the Azeri border (BBC Monitoring, 2008).

In addition to these hostile actions of foreign policy short of war, other forms of aggressive and non-military foreign policy actions have also proven to have rallying effects for leaders. For example, economic sanctions have been considered important foreign policy tools that can also be used for domestic purposes. Scholars such as Baldwin have mentioned economic sanctions as one of the three ways of conducting foreign policy, together with diplomacy and war. According to Baldwin, a leader can use diplomacy, economic sanctions, or military force to coerce a foreign government to



do something (1985).<sup>6</sup> Scholars such as Lindsay (1986), Rivlin (2008) and Ozdemir and Taydas (2007) have emphasized that leaders can also employ economic sanctions to deal with some domestic problems. Lindsay, in her study on economic sanctions, lists a government's attempt to increase its domestic support as one of the five reasons for economic sanctions (1986). According to her, in certain instances, political leaders prefer to use economic sanctions instead of military force in order to distract the public's attention and provide a popularity boost. For instance, "[t]he Eisenhower administration embargoed Cuba two weeks before the presidential election, partly to improve Nixon's electoral chances (Schreiber, 1973: 393). Similarly, Britain imposed sanctions on Italy in 1935 to appease domestic outrage at the invasion of Abyssinia (Baer, 1973: 167-168)" (Lindsay, 1986; 156). Lindsay also provides different examples of successful domestic use of economic sanctions. According to her:

With the public clamoring for an embargo, British officials led the sanctions drive at the League of Nations. The National Government called new elections and, running on a pro-sanctions platform, won additional seats in Parliament. As former Prime Minister Lloyd George remarked wryly at the time "Sanctions came too late to save Abyssinia but they are just in time to save the Government...

The oil embargo succeeded spectacularly as a domestic symbol for the Saudi monarchy. Saudis applauded the concrete demonstrations of the regime's commitment to the Palestinians...the embargo infused the Saudi system more legitimacy at home than it had ever enjoyed...

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<sup>6</sup> Drury gives the example of the development of crisis between the US and Iraq during the First Gulf War to demonstrate the use of these different measures, starting from diplomatic negotiations, following economic sanctions, and finally ending up with the use of military force (2001).

Sanctions also benefited Jimmy Carter during the Iran crisis. The week the hostages were seized, 32 percent approved and 55 percent disapproved of his handling of the Presidency. One month later, 61 percent approved and 30 percent disapproved. This dramatic reversal partly reflects the tendency of the American public to rally behind the President during a crisis, but it also reflects approval of the sanctions. (Lindsay, 1986: 167-168)

Rivlin (2008), in her study, explains political leaders' use of the foreign policy tool of economic sanctions to confront domestic problems as follows:

Presidents, inclined to act to increase support among their partisan supporters may find restraints on their ability to use force because of public attention to foreign policy issues. In these situations, the president is more likely to turn to visible non-use of force actions. I argue that a president, faced with these possible constraints on the use of force, could turn to sanctions, which may be an option for presidents who "...seemingly feel compelled to dramatize their opposition to foreign misdeeds..." As a result, it is possible that an implementation of sanctions is a likely substitute for a use of force—it sends a strong statement that the president is handling the situation, but does not risk the costs associated with a use of force, and is thus less offensive to a foreign-policy attuned public. (2008: 80)

Rivlin states that President Jimmy Carter frequently used economic sanctions as a substitute for military force during his presidency. For her, since Jimmy Carter's presidency, economic sanctions have proven to be a popular policy tool among presidents and presidents have more frequently employed them for domestic purposes (2008: 76). With the end of the Cold War, economic

sanctions have been used even more frequently in international relations due to the desire to rely less on military force (Drury, 2000: 2001). Although there is still a need for a systematic study in this field to clarify the relationship between sanctions and domestic politics, the writings of these scholars from diverse backgrounds strongly suggest that economic sanctions may be used in order to boost presidential popularity and to divert attention from domestic problems.

The aforementioned studies demonstrate the forms of aggressive and conflictual foreign policies short of war and armed conflict that can be, and have been, used to rally the domestic public. Other studies that focus on the interaction between public opinion and foreign policy reveal that non-conflictual and cooperative foreign policy actions can also be used as strategies to rally the public around the president. Mueller, in his study, provides a classification of possible foreign policy actions that created rallying effects between the Truman and Johnson presidencies. According to him, these actions include the following categories:

First there are the four instances of sudden American military intervention: Korea, Lebanon, the Bay of Pigs and the Dominican Republic. A second closely related category encompasses major military developments in ongoing war; in Korea, the Inchon landing, and the Chinese intervention; in Vietnam, the Tonkin Bay episode, the beginning of the bombing of North Vietnam, the major extension of this bombing, and the Tet offensive. Third are the major diplomatic developments of the period: crises over Cuban missiles, the U2 and atomic testing, the enunciation of the Truman doctrine with its offer of aid to Greece and Turkey, the beginning of and major changes in the peace talks in Korea and Vietnam, and the several crises in Berlin. Fourth are the two dramatic technological developments: Sputnik and the announcement of the first Soviet atomic test. The fifth category includes the

meetings between the president and the head of the Soviet Union at Potsdam in 1945, Geneva in 1955, Camp David in 1959, Paris in 1960, Vienna in 1961, and Glassboro in 1967. (1973: 210)

Although Mueller stressed the rallying effect of these different foreign policy developments, scholars did not pay the same attention to more diplomatic and cooperative actions in the context of diversionary theory. However, these different forms of foreign policy actions have been studied extensively by scholars who focus on the relationship between public opinion and policy, such as Lammers (1982), MacKuen (1983), Simon and Ostrom (1989), Marra, Ostrom and Simon (1990), and Brace and Hinckley (1992). These scholars point out that different form of presidential dramas, such as presidential trips, foreign policy speeches and peacemaking ventures, can boost approval rates of the presidents.

According to the studies in the field of public opinion, there are several positive and cooperative foreign actions that can be employed by political leaders in order to boost their approval ratings or to divert the public's attention from political and economic problems. Among these, presidential dramas constitute one of the most studied forms of foreign policy behaviors with domestic purposes. Simon and Ostrom, in their studies on presidential dramas, divide the dramas into three groups, which include televised speeches, foreign travels and presidentially relevant events (1989). For instance, in terms of the effects of televised speeches on the popularity of the presidents, Ostrom and Simon argue:

The televised speech enables the president to operate in a setting where he is unhindered by rival decision makers or aggressive reporters. It thus supplies the opportunity to focus public attention, cultivate public support, and use it to acquire leverage over competing decision makers. (1989: 61)

Other scholars have also pointed out the impact of speeches on presidents' approval ratings. According to Ann Rivlin, many studies on this topic conclude that declining levels of public approval lead a president to give more addresses. Rivlin stated that:

Ragsdale suggests that changes in public approval lead a president to give more major addresses or addresses broadcast on television. Her analysis included the years 1949 to 1980. Hart concurred with this finding; he argued that presidents respond to low popularity with increased speechmaking. Andrade and Young, in their attempt to identify the conditions under which a president will turn to foreign policy topics in his public addresses, also report that public opinion plays a role in speechmaking decisions. Their analysis of addresses from 1953 to 1993 includes presidential speeches with exclusively foreign policy content, and concludes that “new emphasis on foreign policy may not reflect any particular increase in foreign policy problems, or any particular configuration of international interests, but simply an opportunity for a president to cultivate [an] image of power and influence in the wake of a declining ability to affect domestic policy.” (2005: 8)

Andrade, in her study also discusses presidential speechmaking and states that:

Presidential rhetoric and speechmaking can easily be seen as an influential tool of governing...Presidents may use their office as a “bully pulpit” and attempt to divert attention away from domestic concerns by emphasizing foreign policy. The president’s position as a national and global leader gives him unequalled media coverage and unique opportunity to address and attempt to influence public opinion...

...president may change the topic or focus of any speech, reflecting the need to divert public attention. (Andrade, 2003: 57)

Scholars in the field of public opinion also indicated the significance of the subject of the speeches. For scholars like Rivlin, in these speeches, presidents usually concentrate on foreign policy issues. According to her:

....the president may seek to focus attention on foreign policy issues by criticizing another state, individual, or action in the international realm in a nationally broadcast address...Rather than risking lives, and the start of a conflict that may become unpopular if it drags on, the president could create a sense of crisis and rally the population by highlighting undesirable actions by another international actor in a speech broadcast to the nation. In other words, the president criticizes other actors in order to focus the attention of the American voters on the international realm and away from other issues that may affect their voting behavior. (Rivlin, 2008: 85)

A second set of presidential dramas that has been commonly cited in the literature includes presidents' foreign trips, which involve a high level of diplomatic interaction and capture substantial media attention. For many scholars, foreign travels play a significant role in raising the status and standing of a president and making him look more like a leader.(Lammers, 1982; Hart, 1987). For example, Kernell stressed that “[m]eetings abroad with other heads of state are especially valuable in reminding the electorate of the weighty responsibilities of office and of the president’s diligence in attending to them” (1986: 95). MacKuen, in his analysis of presidential dramas (1983), tested this hypothesis and concluded that an overseas tour or a summit can raise the popularity of the president. Technological improvements in transportation and the increasing ease of travelling overseas have caused an increase in leaders’ use of this foreign policy tool for domestic purposes

(Brace and Hinckley, 1992: 53). Technological developments have also enabled timely and live coverage of these presidential trips by the media. Today, presidential summits and meetings are covered more extensively and promptly than years ago. This increased coverage has increased the influence of these meetings on the public's perception of presidents.

In another study conducted on this topic, Brace and Hinckley found that presidents can utilize foreign trips to increase their popularity and to carve out their own place in history, in addition to using them to strengthen their nation's foreign policy. According to this study, most of a US president's foreign travels are strategic and reactive and they are more likely to occur during election years and during times of economic problems. The study also revealed that the timing of some of these trips is both inversely and significantly related to a president's approval rating. Brace and Hinckley contended that while these trips may be announced for foreign policy objectives, they are timed closely with conditions affecting a president's support at home (1993; also see Hansen, 2004). For example, Samuel Kernell argued that Eisenhower's "good will" tour was organized at a time when the presidential approval rating was his main consideration (1986). In addition, many characterized Nixon's 19-day trip to the Middle East and the Soviet Union in June and July of 1974 as political theatre (Drew, 1974). While he was in the Middle East, his press secretary, Ron Zeigler, conceded to a US information agency official that they hoped to use the press coverage of Nixon's meeting with leaders as a means to restore stature to the office and increase his approval rating (Berthoud and Brady, 2001). President Reagan's staffers also admitted that his trip to Europe had similar goals. Kernell stated, "Because the polls were showing a drop in the president's popularity, which made him vulnerable in Washington, his advisers decided that conferring on location with European heads of state would be good for his image as a leader" (Kernell, 1986: 96). Clinton's foreign visits in 1998, his most troubled year in office, also received similar forms of criticism. He was the most-traveled president ever, and 1998, the year that he was facing impeachment by

Congress, was his most-traveled year. His 11-day trip to Africa with 1300 federal officials and his 10-day trip to China, which was rescheduled from an earlier time, led many to have suspicions about his motivations. Even one Clinton official anonymously conceded to some journalists that “pictures of the President with world leaders are always nice” (Berthoud and Brady, 2001). To sum up, as scholars like Rivlin contended “a president seeking re-election and facing a decline in his public approval ratings will be more likely to use personal presidential diplomacy as he is gearing up his re-election campaign” (2008: 84).<sup>7</sup>

Peace-making ventures constitute another form of presidential foreign policy that can create a diversionary effect. Such ventures include mediating disputes between nations, signing bilateral agreements and sending peacekeeping forces to another country. For example, MacKuen (1983) observed a sharp but temporary rise in presidents’ approval ratings after their diplomatic endeavors at peacemaking. In his study, he mentioned Carter’s Camp David peace agreement and Nixon’s announcement of the end of the war in Indochina as examples of these forms of endeavors. According to him, both of these actions produced a sudden rise in the presidents’ approval ratings by as much as 15 points (1983: 165). Scholars like Baker also emphasized the rallying nature of these diplomatic ventures. For Baker (1999), the American public rallies behind the president during international summits and peace conferences, as well as during international conflicts. Baker asserted:

If the conventional wisdom is that the American public will rally behind the commander-in-chief during episodes of international conflict and tension, then one might assume that same public should be at least equally supportive of the chief

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<sup>7</sup> She also cited several other scholars, including Andersen and Farrell (1996) and Goldstein (1996), who argued that presidents strategically attend summits and make foreign visits for domestic purposes and in an effort to present themselves to the voters as peacemakers.



executive in response to more positive, non-crisis rally events- when sources of international tension are resolved, when superpower summits are held, when peace treaties and arms agreements are announced, unless of course such responses are perceived as weakness. (Baker, 1999: 6)

Hagan also argued that in addition to using force towards another state, leaders may use international cooperation. A high-level diplomatic action may demonstrate to an authoritarian leader's domestic public that he is being dealt with and recognized as an equal by the world's leading statesmen and thereby result in an equal degree of rallying among the domestic population (Hagan, 1993: 49).<sup>8</sup> Scholars such as Burbach also discussed peace-promoting events as possible rallying events, but with several conditions, including extensive media coverage, presidential involvement and popularity among the American people (2003).

In fact, numerous studies on the interaction between public opinion and foreign policy have pointed out the rallying effects of different foreign policy actions. These studies have demonstrated that presidents' approval ratings can rise with different foreign policy actions, including foreign policy speeches, foreign trips, and peace-making ventures as well as the engagement in external conflicts or escalating crises. In this study, I aim to build on these studies by integrating them under the framework of a diversionary foreign policy. In addition to accounting for the use of conflictual diversionary foreign policy actions, this study takes into consideration the use of non-conflictual and of cooperative ways of diverting the attention of the domestic audience. It argues that the leader of a

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<sup>8</sup> In a rare attempt to systematize the study of this sort of positive diversionary initiatives, Cho proposed a "diversionary-compliance" hypothesis of nuclear renunciation where leaders give up nuclear weapons to stay in power. According to Cho, the hypothesis is diversionary in the sense that leaders have an ulterior motive of staying in power and keeping their jobs by complying with some international norms. In fact, when domestic crisis threatens the leader's tenure, he may decide to signal friendly gestures and build alliances to obtain support from the international community rather than going war. Cho tests this hypothesis on South Africa by process-tracing its nuclear history and reaches the conclusion that when the degrees of domestic crisis and foreign pressure were high, its nuclear posture turned dovish (Cho, 2004).

country facing domestic problems can achieve the same diversionary ends by pursuing aggressive foreign policies short of war, including threatening to use force, as well as by implementing cooperative foreign policies, including aligning with another state, or attending a summit to negotiate a peace agreement. In fact, in this study, diversionary foreign policy action means any foreign policy action taken by leaders in order to divert the public's attention from domestic problems and to gain domestic popularity.

### **Diversion in States other than the United States**

The second limitation of diversionary scholarship that I will address in this dissertation is the presence of US exceptionalism. With the exception of a few recent studies that investigate the use of diversionary foreign policy by leaders of countries such as Syria (Lawson, 1996; Bronson, 2000), Egypt (Lawson, 1992), Turkey (Demir, 2006), Rwanda (Pickering and Kisangani, 2005), Israel (Aronson and Horowitz, 1971; Blechman, 1972; Mintz and Russett, 1992; Russett and Barzilai, 1992), and Tanzania (Mambo and Shoefield, 2005), diversionary scholarship has primarily focused on the diversionary use of force by great powers, particularly by the United States. In fact, among scholars of the diversionary theory, there has been a tendency to assume that only the leaders of great powers are capable of using diversionary tactics when they confront domestic problems (Fordham, 2002). For example, according to Fordham, the use of diversionary strategies is not a universal way of dealing with domestic problems; it is a particularity of the US presidency (Fordham, 2005).

There are several reasons for this overstatement of US exceptionalism in diversionary studies. Firstly, since in its conventional form the diversionary action can be achieved only through using force against an external actor, there is an assumption that the leader who is trying to divert the attention of the domestic public must be able to bear the economic and political costs of a war or

military strike without causing more instability in his country. According to scholars like Fordham, it is only the US president who has the executive powers to engage in such an international venture and the economic resources to commit to the strategies of externalization, such as launching an air strike. In addition, diversionary studies have shown that in order to be considered as a successful diversionary strategy, in terms of increasing the president's approval rating and distracting public attention, the diversionary war should be short and decisive and should end with a definite victory. The prolongation of the war, the increasing number of casualties, the economic cost and a possible defeat may result in a sharp decline in the popularity of the leader. Because of these factors, it is assumed that the leader who uses force for domestic purposes should have sufficient economic resources and military capabilities to reach his goal militarily. It is again the great powers, and in today's world the US, that have the technical and material capabilities to wage a short and victorious war or surgical military strikes against another state.

In addition to the arguments about the importance of material and economic resources to the use of diversionary strategies, another major argument in support of the thesis on US exceptionalism has been the relationship between the form of government and the need to use diversionary strategies. The predominant idea in the field is that since authoritarian leaders have the authority and power to suppress any form of opposition in their countries, only leaders of democratic countries would need to use diversionary strategies (Gelpi, 1997).<sup>9</sup> According to Clark, Fordham and Nordstrom (2011):

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<sup>9</sup> Gelpi, in his study on governmental structure and externalization of domestic conflicts, tries to provide a framework of this relationship. He asserts that there are different methods that different forms of governments use to deal with the opposition in a country. According to him,

[L]eaders may choose from among at least three solutions when faced with domestic unrest: (1) grant the demands of the demonstrators, (2) suppress the demonstrators by force, and (3) divert the public's attention through the initiation of force externally (1997: 260).

He argues that usually the first option is unfavorable to both democratic and authoritarian leaders. Instead, they choose one of the remaining two options, divert the public's attention or suppress. For Gelpi, domestic

Democratic leaders are usually held to have fewer options than their authoritarian counterparts for dealing with unhappy citizens since autocrats can often repress, or control information in such a way that citizens do not necessarily blame the government for poor domestic circumstances. Further, democratic leaders are often presumed to have more autonomous control over foreign policy and the military than over domestic policy tools. In this light, it is not surprising that Gelpi goes so far as to call diversionary foreign policy “a pathology of democratic systems” (1997: 280), suggesting democratic leaders will succumb to the temptation of international violence when domestic trouble is brewing. (250)

This assumption, together with the aforementioned assumptions on economic capability, has played an important role in the limitation of diversionary studies to US presidents’ use of force and in the persistent neglect of the use of diversionary foreign policy by authoritarian leaders.

In this study, I overcome these limitations of US exceptionalism by focusing on the uses of different diversionary strategies by three authoritarian Middle Eastern leaders. As shown above, there is more than one way for a leader to divert the attention of his domestic public and a leader may always choose a less costly and risky strategy in order to deflect the public’s attention. The existence of

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suppression is more easily achieved by authoritarian regimes, because they face substantially fewer constraints to suppress the demonstrators who will be less armed and organized than the forces of the state. Attacking and suppressing rioters or demonstrators will be less costly than initiating an attack against another state. Moreover, the population in an authoritarian regime has no institutional means to remove the executive from power, so the leader will not be risking his chance to stay in office by suppressing the population. On the other hand, democratic governments cannot suppress demonstrators easily and prefer to divert the public’s attention by externalizing the domestic conflict. In fact, according to him, “the diversionary initiation of force is generally a pathology of democratic states. Ironically, the protections that democratic systems provide for their citizens against domestic repression, combined with the public’s willingness to rally behind their government’s attacks on external foes, have the unfortunate consequence of creating incentives for democratic leaders to use force against noncitizens.” (277) Democratic governments choose this form of behavior because they are subject to electoral recall and do not want to upset their electorates. In addition, legal or constitutional limitations stop the leaders in democratic countries from acting arbitrarily and suppressing opposition. Finally, power is divided in democratic regimes among several institutional centers, which makes it harder for the government to use force against its domestic dissidents (Gelpi, 1997).

these different alternatives demonstrates that being the leader of a superpower is not a prerequisite to using diversionary strategies and that leaders of less resourceful countries may also employ diversionary strategies when they believe them to be necessary. Moreover, studies on authoritarian regimes have demonstrated that these leaders also pay attention to public opinion and try to pursue policies that will not conflict with the demands of their constituencies, though sometimes less than their democratic counterparts. Although elections are not usually held in such countries (and even when they are held, they are not fair elections), and although there are no public approval polls, authoritarian leaders have also certain constituencies whose opinions are critical to the survival of their regimes. Such a constituency may be a group of people, such as a politburo, or a state institution, such as the military or legislative assembly. In most cases, when enacting a law or implementing a domestic or foreign policy, these leaders feel accountable to these constituencies and prefer to build coalitions. Scholars, such as Weeks, have emphasized this aspect of authoritarian regimes. For Weeks, “[A]utocratic leaders, while they may exert enormous control over their subjects, are not usually immune from domestic threats to their tenure” (2008: 61) and “most authoritarian leaders require the support of domestic elites, who act as audiences in much the same way as voting publics in democracies” (2008: 36). In fact, she argued, some authoritarian leaders are more vulnerable and dependent on the support of domestic audiences than is commonly assumed (2008; 2009). Hagan, in his study of political opposition, also asserted the presence of various forms of pressure on authoritarian leaders. He argued:

...even where foreign policy making is dominated by a single dominant leader, that leader should be seen as coping with pressing international and domestic problems...there are often decision making and political constraints, and they are as pervasive as those found in the more established political systems...Not only must the single predominant leader pay close attention to domestic political opposition

outside the regime, but in many regimes there may be a considerable diffusion of power across intensely competitive actors in a highly fragmented setting. (1993: 46-47)

In addition, although authoritarian leaders frequently resort to using force against opposition movements within their countries, they know that using force is not a viable option in the long term. According to Gandhi and Przeworski:

Autocrats may certainly use force to impose cooperation and to eliminate threats of rebellion. But the use of force is costly and may not always be effective. Writing of military dictatorship in Latin America, Cardoso (1979, p. 48) observes that the “state is sufficiently strong to concentrate its attention and repressive apparatus against so-called subversive groups, but it is not as efficient when it comes to controlling the universities, for example, or even the bureaucracy itself.” As a result, the ruler may find it useful to rely on other strategies to elicit cooperation and avert rebellion. (2007: 1281)

Scholars like Kneur also argue that although repression and coercion are often the predominant methods for authoritarian regimes to cope with domestic opposition, the ruling elite have to find some other complementing strategies of legitimation to stay in power. For Kneur these authoritarian leaders usually use foreign policy to raise their stature and legitimacy and to deflect the attention of the domestic public (2011). In fact, there is a growing body of literature in comparative politics which aims to explain that even in the absence of democratic institutions, the leaders of authoritarian countries depend on domestic support and approval to survive in office (Weeks, 2009; Geddes, 2003; Haber, 2006).

Authoritarian rulers of the Middle East are not exceptions. For instance, Byman, Pollack and Waxman showed how Saddam Hussein, in some circumstances, followed the pulse of Iraqi public opinion when making his decisions. For them:

Although Iraqi people are kept under control and the regime rarely canvasses the public in formulating policy, popular opinion is not entirely irrelevant to Iraqi policymaking. If the Iraqi people were to muster the resources and courage to rise up, they could sweep the regime from power. Perhaps surprisingly, Saddam has repeatedly demonstrated that he can be responsive to public opinion under certain conditions... (Byman, Pollack and Waxman, 1998: 129)

Hafiz al-Assad of Syria also had similar concerns regarding the power of public opinion. According to Seale, from the start of Assad's presidency, he paid a particular attention to have a wide popular backing for his policies (Seale, 1988: 172). He argued:

Assad's rule was not based on force alone, nor would it have survived had it been so...The factor of public approval was not negligible, Arab regimes such as his, so often derided as oriental despotisms, in fact required a measure of popular consent, and the importance of public opinion could be gauged by the strenuous efforts made to mobilize it, by the repeated exercises in public self-justification, and by the strident media campaigns which rival Arab states waged against each other. Both the leaders and the led sensed that once popular consent was withdrawn, the substance went out of a regime. (Seale, 1988: 178)

Finally, scholars of Jordan and biographers of King Hussein have also stressed Hussein's need for public support. According to Uriel Dann, an important constant in Hussein's leadership was the need that was felt for constant populist appeals. It was something that distinguished Hussein from his predecessors. For Dann:

His grandfather and true predecessor, King Abdullah...belonged to another world where populism was incomprehensible. That Hussein's world should be different is of course part of a historic process; however, in part it is also a strain, in Hussein's personality that was absent from his grandfather's—the need to feel in rapport with the mass of his subjects. The specific thrusts of these populist appeals or policies varied from time to time, depending on the dominant elements in the changing scene as well as on Hussein's reading of those scenes. (1990)

Scholars who study domestic and foreign policy of authoritarian countries have also emphasized the relation between domestic and foreign policy in these countries. Shibley Telhami, in his study on Arab public opinion during the Gulf Crisis, asserted the influence of the people in Arab countries on foreign policy decision making. According to him:

While it is generally assumed that public opinion matters little in authoritarian polities,...on issues of foreign policy, Arab public opinion has a discernible impact on the foreign policies of Arab states; moreover in the conduct of Persian Gulf War, Arab public opinion was a key element in the strategies of the central parties...

...Arab leaders act as though Arab public opinion matters. This judgment is historically valid, as witnessed by the popular revolution against an entrenched shah in Iran; the popular uprising across the Middle East in the 1950s that helped to topple several Arab governments; massive food riots in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia, all of which were followed by consequential policy shifts; and the apparent increase in the political power of social and religious movements. The concern of Arab leaders is not irrational. (Telhami, 1993: 183-185)

In fact, as noted by Hagan, the predominant leaders in authoritarian countries, despite their political power and influence, continue to be preoccupied with issues pertaining to legitimacy problems. And



for them, one way of confronting and overcoming these legitimacy-related troubles is finding a foreign policy issue to rally people behind their regimes (1983: 56). Numerous leaders of Middle Eastern countries have employed the strategy of manipulating a foreign policy-related event in order to retain or regain their legitimacy and standing. This frequent use of foreign policy for domestic ends in the Middle East is explained by the nature of politics and the relationship between the leaders and their societies. According to Dawisha:

...[G]iven the environment in which Arab politics operate, it is easy to see why there is such a strong correlation between foreign policy and domestic legitimacy. Conflict in the area is endemic: there is the perennial Arab-Israel struggle; there is the constant conflict over territorial issues born out of the colonial legacy and in some cases still not satisfactorily resolved; there are immense numbers of sectarian and ethnic divisions that cut across state boundaries, causing not only intra-state but also inter-state conflict; and finally there is the identification by the citizens of the various Arab states with the universalist values of Arabism and Islam. Not only do these two ideological forces tend to weaken people's identification with their own states, Arabism and Islam also are regularly used by Arab leaders to appeal to the loyalty of the citizens of other Arab states, thus undermining the legitimacy and stability of their regimes. (285)

Some of these studies on the domestic and foreign policy nexus in authoritarian countries emphasized the diversionary behavior of authoritarian leaders but they were primarily conducted in the field of area studies and rarely entered into a dialogue with diversionary scholarship. In one of these studies, Tessler and Grob Schmidt argued that Arab leaders sometimes deliberately involve themselves in regional conflicts in an attempt to enhance their legitimacy, deflect the attention of their people from domestic grievances, and justify the suppression of political dissent (1995: 144). In

another study, Anderson contended that Arab leaders sometimes consider foreign threats useful for their regimes. According to him, these threats provide both legitimacy and influence to these leaders when they confront domestic problems. Perthes, in his study on state-building in the Middle East, also emphasized the domestic use of foreign policy in countries like Syria. According to him, throughout its history, the Middle East has witnessed many cases where political leaders have deliberately used war preparation and international conflict to increase the infrastructural power of their rule and to force or convince domestic opposition to accept the terms of their incumbent regimes due to the “urgency” of the situation for the nation (2000: 159). Finally, Hagan, in his study on political opposition, also mentioned the political use of foreign policy by authoritarian leaders of Third World countries. He stated that:

...the political use of foreign policy results in external behavior that is hardly restrained or in any way watered down, and not in line with the passive behavior often expected from the weak states of the Third World. It necessarily involves a strong element of nationalism, quite often in the form of picturing the international system as a hostile environment. The resulting hostility is a familiar theme in the Third World foreign policy analyses, and...extreme levels of hostility are very well documented, especially for relatively radical regimes in China, Iran, Cuba, Indonesia, and Syria. (1983: 49)

Integrating the results of these area studies and diversionary scholarship will show that public opinion is an important concern not only for the leaders of democratic countries but also for the leaders of authoritarian regimes. It will also demonstrate that the leaders of small states have the ability to use diversionary strategies by adopting less costly and less risky foreign policy initiatives than war and armed conflict. In fact, the use of externalization and diversionary strategies is more common in world politics than mainstream diversionary scholarship assumes.

## Leadership Matters

Richard Nixon, after his resignation from the presidency, began to publish extensively on issues related to policy and world politics, in an attempt to restore his image and to share his experiences with younger generations. In the opening sentences of one of his most significant books on leadership, Nixon stated:

In the footsteps of great leaders, we hear the rolling thunder of history. Throughout the centuries—from the ancient Greeks, through Shakespeare, to the present day—few subjects have proved more perennially fascinating to dramatists and historians alike than the character of great leaders...

What makes the role of these leaders so compellingly interesting is not just its drama, but its importance—its impact. When the final curtain goes down on a play, the members of the audience file out of the theater and go home to resume their normal lives. When the curtain comes down on a leader's career, the very lives of the audience have been changed, and the course of history may have been profoundly altered. (1982: 1-2)

At the time that Nixon wrote these words, leadership and the role that leaders play in world politics had been for a long time largely ignored in international studies. The dominance of systemic theories of international relations during the Cold War years had resulted in the alienation of individual-centered approaches. This predominant idea in international studies began to be challenged after the end of the Cold War by an increasing number of studies that focused on leaders, leadership styles, political leadership, and the relationship of these variables to foreign policy-making. Most of these revisionist studies built on some of the findings of earlier studies, including Graham Allison's work

on conceptual models (1969), Brecher and Wilkenfeld's study on decision making in times of crisis (1989), Alexander George's study on presidential personality and performance (1998), Morton Halperin's studies on bureaucratic politics (1972, 1974), Robert Jervis's study on perception and misperception (1976), and Robert Putnam's model of two different levels of decision making (1993).

In one of the examples of these early studies, Kelman discussed the different roles that individuals may play within international relations. In his piece, he stated:

While agreeing that the nation-state remains the basic unit of analysis in international relations, I would stress that individuals constitute the ultimate locus of action. Individual decision makers act, set the limits and define the mood within which decision makers can operate; and individual actors carry out the official and unofficial interactions of which international relations consist. (1970: 3)

In another study, Kellerman and Rubin, underlined the importance of leadership to understanding international conflicts and negotiations. They argued that:

While the media have always lavished attention on leaders as "stars", scholars have been much less interested in the role of the leader in world politics. To be sure, leaders have figured prominently when there was not mistaking their pivotal role. In particular, Robert. C Tucker drew our attention to the importance of the dictator in the foreign policy systems of totalitarian states...

For the rest, however, academics have tended to underplay (or even ignore) the human element, or to refer to it in ways that obscure rather than clarify the national leader's particular significance. Very little work has been done on how leader-follower relationships shape leaders' perceptions and decisions on foreign policy

issues, on how the personality of national leaders impinges on their performances in international settings, or on how national leaders view and relate to each other (1988: 2).

Byman and Pollack also expressed the need to “bring the statesman back in” in order to be able to take into account all of the variances in the foreign affairs of nations. They also questioned the accuracy and reliability of an explanation of countries’ foreign policies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century without taking into account the political leaders:

How can we explain twentieth-century history without reference to Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, or Mao Zedong? Nor would any policymaker in any capital try to explain the world today without recourse to the personal goals and beliefs of Bill Clinton, Vladimir Putin, Jiang Zemin, and Saddam Hussein, among others. Indeed the policymaking community in Washington takes it as an article of faith that who is the prime minister of Great Britain, the chancellor of Germany, or the king of Saudi Arabia has real repercussions for the United States and the rest of the world. As Henry Kissinger remarked, "As a professor, I tended to think of history as run by im-personal forces. But when you see it in practice, you see the difference personalities make." (2001; 108)

According to Byman and Pollack, scholars’ ignorance about the importance of the individual was a result of political scientists’ negligently exclusive attention to systemic factors to explain the vast majority of events in international relations. Byman and Pollack stated:

It is time to rescue men and women, as individuals, from the oblivion to which political scientists have consigned them. This article is not intended as a comprehensive account of the importance of individuals- such an effort would require the work of many lifetimes- but it is intended to question scholars' current assumptions about international politics and show the plausibility of analyzing international relations by focusing on the role of individuals. (2001: 109)

For them, although a country's strategic position, domestic politics, culture, and other systematic and domestic factors shape a state's intentions, individual leaders have the ability to overshadow these factors or, in some instances, exercise direct and decisive influences on the behaviors of states. In fact, it is the political leader who usually sets the ultimate and secondary intentions of the state and shapes its strategies.

Hermann and Hagan also emphasized the significance of leaders and leadership in foreign policy-making. They contended that for the past several decades, most scholars of world politics had discounted leaders and proposed to concentrate on the international constraints that limit what leaders can do. However, in reality, when people speak about foreign policy, they focus mostly on the decision makers. Hermann and Hagan said:

When conversations turn to foreign policy and international politics, they often focus on particular leaders and evaluations of their leadership. We grade Bill Clinton's performance abroad; argue about why Benjamin Netanyahu is or is not stalling the Middle East peace process; debate Mohammed Khatami's intentions regarding Iranian relations with the United States; and ponder what will happen in South Africa or Russia when Nelson Mandela or Boris Yeltsin leaves office. In each case,

our attention is riveted on individuals whose leadership seems to matter beyond the borders of the countries they lead. (1998: 124)

Bruno de Mesquita also raised the issue of leadership. In one of his articles on the relationship between domestic politics and international relations, he wrote:

..I believe it is time to bring the study of citizens, leaders, and leadership back to the forefront.

Leaders, not states, choose actions. Leaders and their subjects enjoy the fruits and suffer the ills that follow from their decisions. Alas, leaders seem to be motivated by their own well being and not by the welfare of the state. The state's immorality beyond their own time is secondary to the quest of leaders for personal political survival. How else can we explain the long survival in office of such figures as Saddam Hussein, Fidel Castro, Mobutu Sese Seko, or Ferdinand Marcos even while they impoverished their nations...Without bringing leaders and their domestic incentives back to the forefront of our research, I believe that we cannot really hope to understand the motivations and constraints that shape international politics and economics, the very factors we hope to explain (2002; 4).

Despite these repeated calls by scholars to focus on the roles of individuals and leaders in foreign policy-making, such a focus is still lacking from international relations literature and in diversionary scholarship. There is a general consensus in diversionary literature that it is the leader who tries to divert the attention of his people from domestic economic, political, and social problems in order to stay in office, to rally the population behind his leadership, to get re-elected or to boost his approval rating. It is the political leader that makes decisions on diversionary foreign policy and he is the one

who implements this decision. In addition, the political leader also is the primary winner if his action results in victory. However, diversionary studies have continuously neglected the role of the political leader and the difference that a leader can make in the formulation, selection and implementation of this policy. The only exception has been Hermann's emphasis on the possibility of a relationship between leadership traits and different diversionary mechanisms. In one of her studies on the role of leadership in negotiation and mediation, Hermann argued that different leaders provide different solutions to deal with domestic problems, such as a change in foreign policy. She stated:

Change is also possible when a leader is in trouble, for example, when a leader faces a disruptive domestic situation or risks alienation of an important constituency by not solving a problem. Redirecting attention can often be helpful in such situations so that the constituents' minds are taken off their current problem. Change is used here as a scapegoat to get the leadership off the hot seat. If there is domestic turmoil, as was the case in Argentina in 1982, the leadership may consider a bold new international venture to distract attention. For Argentina it was an invasion of the Falkland Islands. For other leaders, it may be a summit or state visit where new proposals can be made that take up media time and replace what is happening domestically. What leaders under such conditions want to create is a situation that will bring support to the regime or, at the least, bring their constituents together to deal with a common problem. Changes made under these circumstances are often dramatic and reorienting in nature to capture the attention of those causing trouble for the leaders. (1995: 64) 10

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10 Another exceptions in this field was Smith's study on International Crises and Domestic Politics. According to him political leaders have two audiences (their domestic constituents and foreign rivals) and



Hermann, in different instances, also mentioned the necessity of considering multiple diversionary strategies and the possible impact that leadership has on the strategy selection. However, despite these “red flags” scholars have continued to view the diversionary action as a mechanical deflection of domestic problems to the realm of foreign policy. So it has been assumed that regardless of the differences in rulers and in their personalities, when they confront domestic problems, they react uniformly in the way in which they externalize the domestic conflict to a foreign enemy or a rival. This argument not only ignores the role of a political leader during the process of diversionary decision making but also neglects how differences in leadership and leadership styles can influence the forms of diversionary behavior employed.

The main goal of this study is to fill in this missing link and to highlight the relationship between leadership traits and the diversionary action utilized. This study will demonstrate that leaders are not just empty vessels that automatically externalize domestic problems to the foreign policy realm. A leader’s beliefs and politically-relevant psychological traits play an important role in the determination of the foreign policy action used for diversionary purposes. In order to achieve this, I will utilize the studies and models developed by foreign policy scholars to understand the relationship between leadership styles and foreign policy.

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when formulating their foreign policies they take into account the reaction of both these levels. He differentiates competent and incompetent leaders during an international crises and argues:

The interaction of domestic and international politics enables leaders to make credible threats... Since voters punish leaders who do not carry out their threats, leaders run a risk if they make threats. If their bluff is called and a war occurs, then they must decide whether to intervene, and failure to do so harms reelection prospects. A leader's competence determines the benefit of intervening. A highly competent leader may actually welcome the opportunity, since it allows her to demonstrate her superior abilities to the voters. Less competent leaders, although they want to avoid fighting, are also compelled to intervene to avoid being punished electorally. For the least competent leaders, intervention is not an option; their poor performance would provide yet more evidence of their low quality, and they will suffer the same electoral fate whatever they decide to do. (1998: 633)

Although the leadership traits of different leaders and the influence of these traits to different foreign policy actions can be analyzed and discussed, the impact of these traits becomes more significant when the leader in question plays a predominant role in foreign policy-making. In fact, as Kellerman states:

The leader's impact on foreign policy will vary according to the scope of his power, authority, and influence within his own nation state. The more power, authority, and influence he has, the greater his impact on foreign policy, and the greater his impact on foreign policy, the more his effect on world politics. (1988: 4)

As Hinnebusch stated, the role and impact of leaders became more significant in the personalized authoritarian regimes typical of the Middle East. According to him, the choices and style of these authoritarian Middle Eastern leaders becomes decisive, particularly in a crisis or a critical bargaining situations, such as the Gulf Crisis (Hinnebusch, 2002: 16).

Considering the easiness of observing the impact of leadership styles on the decision making process when the leader is the predominant actor in foreign policy making, the primary focus of this study will be predominant leaders. In the remainder of this section, the conditions under which the authoritative decision unit is likely to be a predominant leader will be discussed.

### **Predominant Leaders**

Scholars who have examined how governments and ruling parties around the world make foreign policy decisions have come up with an extensive array of different entities that play important roles in making and implementing foreign policy decisions. These different entities include individual leaders, such as prime ministers, presidents, and party secretaries, groups, such as standing committees and cabinets, and institutions, such as bureaucracies, military and legislatures. Foreign

policy scholars have tried to classify these different entities in a meaningful way in order to enhance the ability to account for governments' behaviors in the foreign policy arena. Charles Hermann, Joe Hagan and Margaret Hermann have contended that three types of decision units may exist among the various political entities listed above: the powerful leader, the single group, and the coalition of autonomous actors (Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Hermann and Hagan, 1998; Hermann, 2001; Beasley, Kaarbo, Hermann and Hermann, 2001). Although they recognized the existence of multiple domestic and international factors that can and do influence foreign policy behavior, for them, these influences are channeled through the political apparatus of a government that identifies, decides, and implements foreign policy. In fact, they argued, within any government "there is an individual or a set of individuals with the ability to commit the resources of the society and, when faced with a problem, the authority to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed." They called this set of decision makers the "authoritative decision unit" and seek to understand how it shapes foreign policy decision making across diverse situations and issues as well as different political settings (Hermann, 2001a: 48).

According to them, the decision unit framework has the following components:

- 1) it views decision making as involving responding to foreign policy problems and occasions for decision; 2) it focuses on three types of authoritative decision unit; 3) it defines the key factors that set into motion alternative decision processes; and 4) it links these alternative decision processes to particular outcomes. (Hermann, 2001a: 51-52)

The model not only categorizes authoritative decision units but provides a framework for researching and studying decision making in all types of countries. Most of the previous models on decision making were focused almost exclusively on US foreign policy-making and therefore, were

not useful for studying nondemocratic, transitional regimes and less developed polities or in conducting comparative studies in countries' decision making. The decision unit model developed by Hermann, Hagan and Hermann is helpful to overcoming these stark limitations in the decision making literature and the agency deficiency within diversionary studies. As earlier stated, this model includes three types of decision units -- the predominant leader, the single group and the coalition. However, I will focus on the predominant leader in this study because the way in which the personality traits of the predominant leader influences the foreign policy-making is more observable.

The predominant leader is defined as an individual leader who "has the power to make the choice concerning how a state is going to respond to a foreign policy problem" (Hermann, 2001b: 84).

When the leader is the predominant one and when everybody knows about his predominance, "those with different points of view generally stop public expression of their own alternative positions out of respect for the leader or fear of reprisals" (ibid).

There are several conditions that make the decision unit a predominant leader. For example, the decision unit is likely to be "a predominant leader if the regime has one individual in its leadership who is vested with the authority—by a constitution, law, or general practice—to commit or withhold the resources of the government with regard to the making of foreign policy" (ibid). In addition, the decision unit may also be a predominant leader "if the foreign policy machinery of the government is organized hierarchically and one person is located at the top of the hierarchy who is accountable for any decisions that are made" (Hermann, 2001b: 85). Moreover, the ownership of coercion in the hands of a single individual creates a suitable situation to have a predominant leader as a decision unit model. Authoritarian leaders, including dictatorships and one man governments, may also be considered within this category. Well-known examples include Fidel Castro in Cuba and Kim Il Sung in North Korea.

An important issue is the willingness of a predominant leader to use his authority and power in issues related to foreign policy. In fact, in some rare instances, although there is a predominant leader, that person may not be willing to interfere in or deal with a foreign policy problem. For Hermann, the predominant leader “must exercise authority in dealing with the problem under consideration to become the authoritative decision unit. Otherwise, another type of decision unit assumes responsibility for making the decision” (2001b: 85). According to Hermann, single, powerful leaders have been found to act as predominant leaders under the following conditions:

- (1) they have a general, active interest in, as well as involvement with, foreign and defense issues; (2) the immediate foreign policy problem is perceived by the regime leadership to be critical to the well-being of the regime—it is perceived to be a crisis; (3) the current situation involves high level diplomacy or protocol (a state visit, a summit meeting, international negotiations); or (4) the issue under consideration is of special interest or concern to the leader (ibid).

Hermann also mentioned the effects of crisis periods on the decision-making process and the emergence of a predominant leader during such periods. For her, “even leaders who generally do not have the authority to commit the resources of their governments without consulting with others can act like predominant leaders under certain conditions. When such leaders have an intense interest in foreign affairs or a particular substantive foreign policy issue or find themselves in the midst of an international crisis, they can assume more authority than is ascribed to their positions” (Hermann 2001b: 86).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Overall, scholars who studied crisis and foreign policy behavior in these instances contended that three major changes take place in terms of the contraction of authority: “(1) the shifting of authority to higher levels in a hierarchical structure; (2) a reduction in the number of persons or units participating in the exercise of authority without reference to hierarchy and (3) an increase in the number of occasions for the existence of

With the introduction of this new variable of predominant leaders, the critical set of variables for explaining a foreign policy decision becomes the leadership traits of the predominant leader. The new questions focus on the relationship between leadership traits and the selection of different diversionary mechanisms. The new set of questions in this new framework include “What is the relationship between leadership styles of political leaders and the selection of different diversionary strategies?” and “Which leadership styles play the most salient roles in the selection of diversionary mechanisms?”. By asking these questions, this dissertation will achieve three different aims. First of all, leaders and leadership traits will be taken into account in explaining diversionary foreign policies

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authority, although the actual number of authority units remain constant.”(Hermann, 1963: 70) All these instances and conditions bring a smaller decision unit in crisis decision making. In fact, in a domestic crisis situation, instead of a coalition of decision makers, usually a predominant leader or in rare instances a loyal single group exercises authority in terms of foreign policy action. For this study, I will focus on the predominant leaders and their influence on the use and selection of diversionary behaviors.

Earlier studies in the field demonstrated that it would be extremely difficult for a leader to follow a diversionary foreign policy when the authoritative decision unit is not a predominant leader. For instance, it has been noted by scholars that coalition decision units are constrained in what they can do in terms of foreign policy (Beasley, Kaarbo, Hermann and Hermann, 2001). The bargaining and competition that takes place between the members of a coalition makes it difficult for the parties to adopt a diversionary strategy. Especially the junior partners of a coalition will realize that the primary winner, in this case the prime minister or president and his party, takes all the rewards, and the junior partners will have to share the long term consequences of a diversionary foreign policy action. When the junior partner of a coalition understands or perceives certain foreign policy action as an attempt to divert the attention of domestic public instead of for national interest, it most probably blocks this foreign policy action. Alastair Smith explains this problem in coalition governments by giving German coalition governments as an example:

The stylized fact of coalition formation in Germany is that the party with the greatest number of seats forms a government with the Free Democrats....The Free Democrats therefore expect to be the junior partner in every government that forms. Although the FDP may have preferences over which party it prefers to be in government with, the FDP receive similar office-holding benefits whichever government forms.

Since the FDP gains the benefits of office whichever government forms, it cares relatively more about national interest than electoral incentives. Just as the Congress limits the ability of the President to pursue electorally motivated foreign policies, the FDP veto policies not in the German national interest. (Smith, 1996: 148).

In fact, if one coalition partner expects to increase its votes or at least keep it on the same level, then actions cannot be taken against the national interest for electoral reasons. It is also extremely difficult to mobilize these more junior members of a coalition to act in accordance with a risky foreign policy, which will benefit the senior political party, at least in the short term.

of countries. Secondly, the dissertation will integrate the literature on leadership studies with the diversionary theory of war literature. A conversation between these two literatures will pave the way for the development of alternative perspectives and approaches in both the diversionary theory of war and the foreign policy decision-making literatures. Finally, this dissertation will be a first step to a much more comprehensive study of the diversionary theory within a new theoretical framework. This new framework will allow us to bring agency back in to the literature and focus on decision makers.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Case Selection**

During the Gulf War and its immediate aftermath, the foreign policies of Middle Eastern states were more prominent on the agenda of foreign policy analysts than probably any other time.<sup>12</sup> With Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, we not only witnessed major transformations in the Arab regional order but also new alignments and critical foreign policy decisions made by the leaders of Middle Eastern states. Predominant leaders of Arab states played important roles in the formulation of these new foreign policies and alignments. This characteristic of the Gulf Crisis has frequently been cited by

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<sup>12</sup> Some examples of the studies on the First Gulf War include David M. Malone, *The International Struggle Over Iraq: Politics in the UN Security Council 1980-2005*, Morris M. Motale, *The Origins of the Gulf Wars*, Debra Lois Shulman, *Regime Strategy and Foreign Policy in Autocracies: Egypt, Jordan, and Syria in the Gulf Wars*; John Bulloch and Harvey Morris, *Saddam's War: The Origins of the Kuwait Conflict and the International Response*, Thomas B. Allen, F. Clifton Berry, and Norman Polmar, *War in the Gulf*, James A. Baker, III, with Thomas M. DeFrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War & Peace, 1989-1992*, Alberto Bin, Richard Hill, and Archer Jones, *Desert Storm: A Forgotten War*, Herbert H. Blumberg, *The Persian Gulf War: Views from the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Lester H. Brune, *America and the Iraqi Crisis, 1990-1992: Origins and Aftermath*, David Campbell, *Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*, Peter Cipkowski, *Understanding the Crisis in the Persian Gulf*, Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh, *The Gulf Conflict, 1990-1991: Diplomacy and War in the New World Order*, Stephen R. Graubard, *Mr. Bush's War: Adventures in the Politics of Illusion*, Roger Hilsman, *George Bush vs. Saddam Hussein: Military Success! Political Failure*, Dilip Hiro, *Desert Shield to Desert Storm: The Second Gulf War*, Thomas Houlihan, *Gulf War: The Complete History*, Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb, *War in the Gulf 1990-91: The Iraq-Kuwait Conflict and its Implications*, Jerry M. Long, *Saddam's War of Words: Politics, Religion, and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait*, Judith Miller and Laurie Mylroie, *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf*, N. C. Menon, *Mother of Battles: Saddam's Folly*, Mohammad-Mahmoud Mohamedou, *Iraq and the Second Gulf War: State Building and Regime Security*, Elaine Sciolino, *The Outlaw State: Saddam Hussein's Quest for Power and the Gulf Crisis*, Dan Tschirgi and Bassam Tibi, *Perspectives on the Gulf Crisis*, Bob Woodward, *The Commanders*, Steve A. Yetiv, *The Persian Gulf Crisis*, Gazi Ibdewi Abdulghafour, *United Nations's Role in the Gulf Crisis*, Alex Danchev and Dan Keohane, eds., *International Perspectives on the Gulf Conflict, 1990-91*, Ken Matthews, *The Gulf Conflict and International Relations*, Haim Bresheeth and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *The Gulf War and the New World Order*, Ibrahim Ibrahim, ed., *The Gulf Crisis: Background and Consequences*, Micah L. Sifry and Christopher Cerf, eds., *The Gulf War Reader: History, Documents, Opinions*, and Adel Akram, *Origins of the Gulf War*.



scholars, like Jerrold Post who argued that one of the most unusual aspects of the Gulf Crisis was “the degree to which the personality and political behavior of the key individual actors played crucial roles on the decision to enter the war” (Post, 1993: 49). David Winter also emphasized that “more than most dramatic political events, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the resulting Gulf War invite personalistic attributions of cause” (1993: 107). According to him:

...the events of 1990-1991 are a case where the two principal leaders’ personalities were important, even decisive....Hussein and Bush occupied strategic locations in their national and international political structures. The events and issues at stake strongly resonated with the deepest images and themes of their respective personalities. Thus the invasion and subsequent Gulf War fit most of the criteria offered by Greenstein (1969: 40-61) for identifying instances where leaders’ personalities make a difference (1993: 108).

However, George H.W. Bush and Saddam Hussein were not the only people who played prominent roles in the foreign policies of their respective countries during the crisis. Predominant leaders of the Middle East, including King Hussein and Hafiz al-Assad, played equally significant roles during the crisis. For almost two years, international attention was focused on these leaders and their decisions regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and the Madrid Peace Process which was initiated by the Bush administration as a side payment to Arab countries that joined or supported the international coalition.

During and in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War, scholars of Middle Eastern politics wrote extensively on the foreign policy-making of individual leaders. Most of these scholars highlighted the immense amount of domestic economic hardship, social instability and political trouble that these regimes were facing during these years and argued that some of their foreign policy decisions were

intended to divert the attention of their people from these problems. Three foreign policy decisions, in particular, were widely interpreted as having been made for domestic political purposes. The first one was Saddam Hussein's verbal and missile attacks against Israel throughout the crisis. Even before his invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein had started to use the discourse of external conspiracy for the failure of his economic policies in Iraq and the increasing social unrest in his country. He intensified his verbal attacks throughout 1990s against Israel and even at one point, threatened to burn down half of Israel. After his invasion of Kuwait, Saddam attempted to legitimize the invasion through "linkage politics." He agreed to withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait if Israeli forces withdrew from Palestinian territories. This *quid pro quo* offer was interpreted by just about everyone who commented on it as being diversionary in nature. According to them, Saddam Hussein aimed to rally the Arab masses behind his leadership and divert the attention from the reality that he was occupying another Arab country and thereby violating international norms and Arab regional order. He knew that his strong messages against Israel would strike a chord with the Arab masses. His anti-Israeli statements and threats reverberated throughout the streets of Arab cities. Major Arab capitals and cities, including the capitals of countries that had been in anti-Saddam Hussein coalitions witnessed pro-Saddam demonstrations. Enjoying this popularity, Saddam intensified his threats against Israel even more and ultimately attacked against Israel with SCUD missiles, which further raised his popularity in the region.

The second prominent case of diversionary foreign policy-making during this period was the alignment of Jordan with Iraq during the Gulf War. Throughout the Gulf Crisis, King Hussein preferred not to support the international coalition led by the US and its attacks against Iraq. The most significant social reactions and resistances against the international coalition led by the US took place in Amman and other Jordanian cities. . The Jordanian people engaged in huge campaigns to support the Iraqi people and the Jordanian government tolerated widespread noncompliance with

the UN Security Council's decision to implement economic sanctions against Iraq. Studies after the end of the war revealed that it was the Jordanian government and especially King Hussein who rallied the people in support of Saddam Hussein. During the crisis, Jordan was just recovering from an economic crisis that had erupted a year before and Palestinian refugees, which constituted 60% of the Jordanian population, had been increasingly raising their voices against King Hussein's policies. In order to divert the people's attention from the domestic problems and unify them around King Hussein's leadership, King Hussein opted to engage in friendly relations with Saddam Hussein despite the pressure and pleas of the United States and other Arab countries. Western governments, including the US and Israeli governments, understood the internal dynamics of Jordan and King Hussein's need for domestic support and therefore, did not punish Jordan after the war and included Jordan in the peace process.

The third prominent example of diversionary foreign policy-making during this period was Syria's policy towards Israel and the peace process immediately after the Gulf War. The period after the Gulf War was a chaotic period for Syria and many other Arab regimes. The short diversion of attention from domestic problems to the Gulf Crisis was over and despite economic assistance from the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia, Syria began to face very serious economic problems after the war. People from different social segments and classes, particularly laborers and farmers, started to express their grievances against the government. In addition the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe began to have impact on the Syrian society as well. Some liberal groups were becoming increasingly vocal in their demands for a more democratic political sphere. Faced with these hostile circumstances, the al-Assad regime surprised many political pundits by changing its inflexible stance towards Israel and initiating a more accommodating policy. However, the change was not a total break from its previous foreign policy stance. Within a two year period, observers witnessed both accommodative and aggressive foreign policy gestures from the al-Assad regime

towards Israel. For scholars like Fred Lawson, both of these foreign policy patterns were followed because of domestic political concerns. They were both intended to divert the attention of the public from domestic problems to foreign policy issues and with the help of the state-controlled media, the al-Assad regime reached its goal of shifting the people's focus to the peace process. However, when after a brief period of time some segments of the public started to re-raise their voice about their demands for a more equitable income distribution, Assad made speeches on the urgency of national security matters and began to adopt a more classical form of diversion by threatening Israel (1996).

The above three foreign policy actions by three Middle Eastern leaders were interpreted as diversionary in nature by authoritative sources, including diplomatic historians and area studies specialists. Saddam Hussein's verbal and missile attacks against Israel were examples of classical diversionary strategy, in which leaders use force and threats to use force against an external other in order to distract public attention from recurring economic problems. However, King Hussein's diversionary strategy was to cultivate a more positive and friendlier relationship with a neighbor. Finally, Assad's diversionary strategy included the use of both of these conflictual and cooperative policies.

In this study instead of trying to find whether the cases were diversionary in nature or not, I intend to go behind this question, consider the explanations of these sources valid and ask the role of leadership styles on the selection of these diversionary strategies. Thus the goal of this study is not to ask the question of "Do they really try to divert the attention of domestic public?" or "When do they prefer to use diversionary strategies?". Considering the differences among the diversionary strategies in three cases, this study aims to understand the relationship between leadership styles and the selection of different diversionary strategies.

The three countries in this study, Jordan, Iraq and Syria, are all Arab countries in the Middle East that have been members of the Arab League. They have identical historical backgrounds in terms of nation and state-building. They were all artificially formed after World War I and the Sykes-Picot Agreement between Britain and France. During the last years of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle Eastern question (aka “The Eastern question”) became an important aspect of the great power struggle, especially among Britain, France and Germany. Because of this during the First World War (1914-1918), the Middle Eastern territories of the Ottoman Empire were strategic battlegrounds for these powers. With the help of Arab rebellions led by Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca and direct descendent of the Prophet Muhammad, the British Empire managed to defeat Ottoman forces. Although different promises were made by British interlocutors,<sup>13</sup> including Lawrence of Arabia, to the local people during the war, the region was divided between Britain and France pursuant to a secret agreement. This secret agreement -- the Sykes-Picot Agreement -- brought European colonialism to the region and was therefore contradictory to the Hussein-McMahon correspondence of 1915-1916, which promised the formation of independent Arab states in the region. Under the Sykes-Picot Agreement, territories of the Middle East were carved up by the European powers and different “zones of influence” were formed. In this new demarcation, the territories of Iraq were allotted to Britain.

In March 1917, British forces successfully invaded the province of Baghdad and made it the center of British colonial rule in the territories of Iraq. After the end of the war later in 1921, the newly-

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<sup>13</sup> An example of this was the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, which was an exchange of letters between Sharif Hussein of Mecca, who was the governor of holy places including Mecca and Medina and was recognized as the true descendent of the Prophet Muhammed, and Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt. The letters were about the cooperation between the Arab forces of Sharif Hussein and the British army. McMahon and the British government expected an Arab revolt in the region against the Ottoman State, which would result in the allocation of many Ottoman forces to stop this revolt and consequently help defeat the Ottoman state on other fronts by British forces. After the agreement, Sharif Hussein organized an army of tribal warriors and attacked important Ottoman installations and supply routes (Thompson, 1999: 85).

formed League of Nations granted the mandate of this territory to Britain. The British government brought together three provinces of the former Ottoman Empire, namely Baghdad, Basra, and later in 1926 Mosul, and delineated the boundaries of the Kingdom of Iraq. Faisal I, the third son of Hussein bin Ali, became the King of Iraq. However, the borders of this new state were drawn arbitrarily by the colonial officers without considering ethnic, sectarian, and religious lines in Middle Eastern societies and the historical backgrounds of these regions (Halliday, 2003: 28).

In the formative years of Iraq, the people living in the territories of Iraq did not have a common identity or loyalty to a higher authority.<sup>14</sup> With increasing institutionalization and centralization of the state, different groups within Iraq began to struggle to dominate the country's political and economic resources. Neither the repressive apparatus of King Faisal nor the Iraqi government could bring an end to the conflicts among these groups. In a candid confession, King Faisal I described Iraqi society in these years as “unimaginable masses of human beings, devoid of any patriotic idea, imbued with religious traditions and absurdities... and prone to anarchy” (Batatu, 1978: 25).<sup>15</sup> As stated by several scholars, the artificial boundaries of the Iraqi state “together with the absence of a stable and centrally organized polity and its religious and ethnic heterogeneity created a situation in which a stable state was a virtual impossibility” (Hassan, 1999: 72). Because of this, Iraq has been considered as the least coherent and governable of all states (Zubaida 1989; Gown 1991). These artificial boundaries of the Iraqi state have led to a situation where “a salient feature of Iraqi politics

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14 For a comprehensive overview of the social structure of Iraq, see Wardī, Alī, and Fuad Baali. *Understanding Iraq: Society, Culture, and Personality*.

15 Aburish, almost 70 years after King Faisal, echoed a similar description of Iraqi society. He stated:

The turbulent history, harsh environment, and multi-stranded culture of Iraq have produced a complex and unique conglomerate which lacks the ingredients for creating a homogenous country and a commitment to the idea of a national community. Modern Iraq is a fractured society in which numerous clusters, tribes, ethnic, and religious groups pay genuine tribute to the idea of a nation state, but one which accords paramountcy to their particular tribal, ethnic or religious background (Aburish, 2001: 3).

has remained inherent instability and a marked propensity toward coercion in the settlement of political disputes” (Kelidar, 1992: 729).

Britain granted independence to Iraq in 1932 and immediately afterwards, Iraq became a member of the League of Nations. However, despite its independence, the state of Iraq had remained under the strong influence of Britain. The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty allowed Britain to maintain military bases in Iraq and to be involved in all matters of Iraqi foreign policy that were relevant to Britain’s interests. This treaty led to the rise of nationalism and anti-British feelings within Iraqi society in the 1930s.

King Faisal died in 1933 and was replaced by his son King Ghazi, who was known to be “a sincere Arab nationalist and a critic of French rule in Syria, Zionist claims in Palestine, and the British colonialists in the Gulf” (Derwisha, 1991: 12). However, King Ghazi died in a suspicious car accident in 1939, which led to the rise of anti-British sentiment among Iraqis. This event was followed by a coup in 1941 that brought anti-British forces in Iraq to power and paved the way for the Anglo-Iraqi War of 1941. In this conflict, British forces defeated the Iraqi army and appointed pro-British Nuri as-Said as the prime minister. However, this change in power did not bring stability to Iraq and the regime was brought down by another coup in 1958 led by Colonel Abd al-Karim Qassem. It was another bloody episode of Iraqi politics. Prime Minister Nuri Said was assassinated and King Faisal II, along with members of the royal family and Crown Prince Abdul Ilah, were executed. These events “set a precedent for the use of violence, terror and conspiracy as a normal instrument of strategy by successive governments which came to power through a series of military coups ” (Darwish and Alexander, 1991: 20). The constant coups, coup attempts and domestic power struggle continued until the Ba’ath coup, which brought Saddam and Bakr to power.

The territories of Jordan witnessed a similar pattern of developments. These territories also remained under the control of the Ottoman Empire for more than four centuries until World War I.

During these years, Jordan became an important passageway for those on pilgrimages from Damascus and Anatolia. Although the Ottoman Empire endeavored to exert strict control over this route in order to provide for the safety of the pilgrims, the empire's control remained weak outside a few populated urban centers. Tribal groups and clans retained much of the control in these territories (Ma'an 1989: 31). World War I and its aftermath also brought dramatic changes to these lands. After the end of World War I, the British government faced the difficult issue of fulfilling contradictory promises that they had given throughout the war to the people of the Middle East. One of the most complicated questions was the future of the Palestinian territories, which later became the Palestinian mandate and included the territories of the East and West Bank of the Jordan River. In order to keep their promises both to the Arabs and Jews, the British government divided the territory into two parts. The East Bank became Transjordan and Abdullah, the son of Sharif Hussein, was installed as the ruler; the West Bank of Jordan was given to Jewish groups.

At that point, there was no common identity among the inhabitants of Jordan. The borders of the new principality did not correspond to any particular historic, cultural, or geographical unit (Shlaim, 2008: 19). The society was a tribal one that had traditionally been far from the centers of power and authority. <sup>16</sup> There were constant rivalries and clashes among the tribes and they did not feel an overarching allegiance to a higher authority (Thompson, 1994: 94).

During its mandate period, Abdullah took important steps to unify the people of Jordan and to earn their loyalty. Abdullah persuaded some tribes to recognize his authority, mostly by giving

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16 Saloukh described the creation of Jordan as "a short-term arrangement between Amir Abdullah and then British secretary of state for colonies, Winston Churchill, during their deliberations in Jerusalem at the end of March 1921. To the British, the creation of the Emirate of Transjordan was part of an effort to appease their Sharifian war-time allies, Arab public opinion, and, more importantly, as a precautionary measure against possible French design to claim additional mandatory authority over the southern regions of Greater Syria" (1994, 25).



concessions to them.<sup>17</sup> However, other more stubborn tribes were forced to accept his rule with the help of the British forces. In 1928, Abdullah made an agreement with the United Kingdom regarding the future of these territories and his rule. The agreement was reminiscent of the Anglo-Iraqi Agreement and “the articles of the agreement reflected the British preoccupation with Transjordan hitherto, with strategic issues (especially related to military matters) and Britain’s relentless pursuit of efficient and effective governance (notably in fiscal matters) to the fore” (Robins, 2004: 36). In the meantime, the Transjordan Frontier Force was established under the British command to control the tribes (Abu Nowar, 173-175 cited in Cunningham, 1997). After the end of World War II, Jordan became an independent state, but “the kingdom remained dependent on the British for its annual subsidy. Britain was permitted to station its troops in the kingdom for the next 25 years and British officers continued to command the Jordanian army” (Robins, 2004: 57).

After the independence of Transjordan, the first conflict in which Abdullah was involved was the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. In this war, Abdullah invaded the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Old City of Jerusalem. Immediately after this invasion, in December 1948, Abdullah declared himself the King of Palestine. A couple months later, he declared the annexation of these territories and changed the name of the country to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; Abdullah himself was proclaimed as the King of Jordan in April 1949. This annexation was not well-received among Arabs and Palestinians. There was widespread suspicion that a partition deal between Abdullah and the Jews had been signed prior to the annexation. After 1948, with these new territories, Jordan was flooded with more than 400,000 Palestinian refugees who escaped from Israeli forces during the war. Moreover, with the possession of these new territories, the West Banker Palestinians became citizens

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17 Abdullah considered Transjordan a first step for his greater aim to rule over Greater Syria. See Yehoshua Porath. “Abdullah’s Greater Syria Program”.

of the Jordanian state (Cunningham, 1997: 46-48). With these developments, the population of Transjordan ballooned from 450,000 to 1,350,000 (Thompson, 1994).

The new citizens of Jordan and the Palestinian refugees brought with them new societal and political cleavages which made it more difficult for Abdullah to foster unity among the people within Jordanian borders. After the influx of Palestinians, a distinctive and significant ethnic divide emerged between the East Bankers, who were natives of Jordan with Bedouin backgrounds, and West Banker Palestinians. Although Abdullah made every attempt to suppress any trace of Palestinian Arab identity, this divide later manifested itself in the economic and spatial realm and became one of the most significant cleavages in Jordanian society. Most of the Bedouin groups continued to live in the rural areas of southern Jordan and engaged in agriculture, whereas Palestinians who began to reside in the larger cities of the north, particularly Amman and Irbid, were employed in the industrial and service sectors (Cunningham, 1997: xiv-xv). 18

In July 1951, a few years after Abdullah formed the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, he was assassinated by a young Palestinian man at the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> Discussion about the successor to Abdullah began even before his funeral. During his life, Abdullah repeatedly changed the crown prince due to his disagreements and dissatisfaction with his sons.<sup>20</sup> After lengthy discussions between the Jordanian government and the British mandate officers in Transjordan, it

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18See Lauri A Brand "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity" *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Vol.24, No:4 (Summer 1995), pp.46-61. Fathi Jordan- An invented Nation?

19 For observers of Arab politics in those days, the assassination was not something unexpected. The annexation of Palestinian territories and more importantly Abdullah's secret meetings with Israeli government made him extremely unpopular among Palestinians. Even before this event, he had an extremely poor reputation among Palestinians due to his friendship and close rapport with the leaders of Jewish Agency (Shlaim, 25). Many Arabs in the region thought that Abdullah had orchestrated the partition of the territories of Palestine with his Israeli friends long before the war. For the Palestinians and for many Arabs his negotiations were a betrayal to the common Arab position against the state of Israel.

20 Although during World War II Nayif was proclaimed as crown prince, in 1947 Abdullah officially declared Talal, father of Hussein, to be his heir.

was decided that Talal, the elder son of Abdullah and the father of King Hussein, would become the King of Jordan. He succeeded Abdullah in 1951, but his rule did not last long either and his son Hussein became the King of Jordan at the age of 18.

The territories of Syria in these years also faced similar political and social developments in post-World War I period. With the end of Ottoman hegemony in the region, the lands of Syria became another contested territory of the Middle East. According to the Sykes-Picot agreement, the territories of Syria were allocated to the French government. However, immediately after World War I, Sharif Hussein's son Faisal came to Damascus with British forces and declared a pan-Arab state. After this incident, the French acted quickly and asked the British government to abide by the principles of the Sykes-Picot agreement. The British government decided to retreat from the Syrian territories in order to prevent any confrontation with French forces and left the Arab forces of Faisal alone. In the coming years, Syria faced domestic sectarian clashes, as well as conflicts with the French government. Only after three years of clashes and skirmishes between Arab and French forces did France gain full control of the region. Faisal was forced to leave the country and, with the help of the British government, he became the King of Iraq.

After France took formal control of the Syrian territories, the French authorities enforced a new administrative division in these territories. In these formative years, Syria suffered from the same domestic economic and social problems that other new states had gone through. The most observable of these problems was the absence of a common identity among the residents of these territories. In the history of the region, there had been no common territorial identity or acknowledgement of a Syrian nationhood. Observers and travelers who visited the region as late as the 1850s emphasized the lack of a broad, shared bond among the residents of Syrian territories. One of those observers stated:

Patriotism is unknown...there is not a man in the country whether Turk or Arab, Mohammedan or Christian who would give a para (penny) to save the Empire from ruin. The patriotism of the Syrian is confined to the four walls of his own house: anything beyond them does not concern him. (Murray, 1858; xlv. Cited in Ma'oz, 1986: 13)

The sharp contrasts among various groups and communal heterogeneity were also expressed in other travel writings and memoirs. In the 1870s, another British observer described communal life in Damascus as follows:

They hate one another. The Sunnites excommunicate the Shiahs and both hate the Druzes; all detest the Ansariyyehs [the Alawites]; the Maronites do not love anybody but themselves and are duly abhorred by all; the Greek Orthodoxy abominate the Greek Catholics and the Latins; all despise the Jews. (Burton, 1875: 105-106 Cited in Ma'oz, 1988: 2)

After the fall of the state formed by King Faisal, the French authorities divided the territories of Syria into different states, along ethnic and religious lines. In addition, the authorities “foiled any tendencies towards Syrian national unity and increased intercommunal contrasts by encouraging polarization in the educational system” (Ma'oz, 1986: 15). This policy led to the absence of a common identity and to sectarian and religious conflicts among the people of Syria.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> In fact, as stated by Ma'oz, in the formative years of Syria, the challenge of national identity was one of the most important problems of the country. According to Ma'oz:

...most of the population in mandatory Syria did not identify itself as Syrian Arabs. The minority communities – both Muslim heterodox and Christian, but with the exception of the Orthodox and Protestant intelligentsia- continued to rely on the French mandatory government. The rural and tribal masses and a considerable portion of the urban lower classes continued to live within the limits of family and regional loyalties. They considered

After the defeat of French forces in World War II, Syria proclaimed its independence in 1941 but French forces evacuated the region only in 1946. However, Syria's independence did not solve the major social and economic problems in this state. The sectarian divisions and lack of cohesion among the different ethnic and religious groups in Syria particularly continued to be a major obstacle for the emergence of a unified country, even after its independence. According to Ma'oz:

When Syria became independent in 1946 she was in many respects a state without being a nation-state, a political entity without being a political community. Her population was highly heterogeneous; within it there existed gaps and frictions among various religious sects, social classes, tribal groups and even between the inhabitants of different towns, such as Damascus and Aleppo. Some of these groups and sects tended to live their own lives in autonomous bodies such as religious communities, or nomadic tribes, and would not submit to central authority. Many inhabitants lacked a strong sense of an all-Syrian territorial identity; there was no common ideological consensus among the various sections of the population. (1972: 389)

As Kessler stated, "sharp distinctions among the desert, the village and the city, and differences among the peoples and the ideas that come from them, have always worked against the kind of cohesion necessary for Syria's political integrity and military defense" (1987: 16). The ethnic and religious groups, which constituted majorities in certain territorial regions, had historically developed

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themselves Sunni Muslim Arabs- rather than Syrian Arabs. Even among the more advanced urban members of the national movement, the feeling of nation-state identity was not as strong as it was in neighboring Arab countries. Among these circles, regional tendencies and/or a Pan-Arab orientation were still strong, owing to the continuation of the past.....or to the persisting belief in Arab unity (1996; 16).

extensive self-government mechanisms and it was difficult for a central authority to control them (Ma'oz, 1996: 21). There was no Syrian identity and no bond strong enough to integrate the heterogeneous demographic structure of Syria (Ma'oz and Yaniv, 1986: 28).

From Syria's independence to Hafiz Assad's ascendance to power, Syrian politics faced constant upheavals and clashes among various factions. Within the first ten years of the new state, Syria had 20 different governments and four separate constitutions. While successive governments in Syria were trying to stabilize the country, there were foreign policy developments taking place in the Middle East, such as the Arab-Israeli War in 1948, which resulted in the overthrow of the government by Colonel Za'im in 1949. This coup was followed by a series of coups and coup attempts by members of different factions within the Syrian army. During these years, political power was vested mostly in the hands of the army officers and power was shifted from one general to another. This political turmoil went on until the rise of Hafiz Assad to power.

In addition to this historical background, there are important similarities in the contemporary demographic structures of these three countries. As stated at length above, all of these three states are multi-ethnic and multi-religious in nature. For instance, Iraq is composed of Sunni Arabs, Shia Arabs, Turkomans, Assyrians, Yazidis and Kurds. Syria is composed of Sunni Arabs, Alawites, Christian Arabs, Druzes, Armenians, Kurds, Palestinians and Turkomans. Finally, although the majority of Jordan's population is Arab, almost 60% is made up of Palestinian refugees who have developed a significantly different identity than Jordanian Arabs. In addition, there are Circassians, Kurds, and Christian groups in Jordan as well. In this sense, none of these countries were ethnically homogenous and stable in the late 1980s. The leaders of these three countries were extremely wary about the political attitudes of the ethnic and religious groups within their borders. During the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein was extremely concerned about the Shia population in the south of Iraq

and about the Kurdish insurgents in the North. Although Assad had just suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood and other Sunni groups in Syria in the early 1980s, he was still wary of those groups and keeping an eye on them. King Hussein was also extremely concerned about the possible instability that Palestinians could create in Jordan after the initiation of Intifada in the West Bank. Furthermore, all three of these leaders belonged to minority groups in their societies. Assad was Alawite in a Sunni-dominated Syria, Saddam Hussein was Sunni in a Shia-dominated Iraq, and King Hussein was a Jordanian Arab in a Palestinian-dominated Jordan.

In addition, all three of these countries were facing important economic and social problems in the late 1980s. The bread riots and the Ma'an uprising in Jordan in the late 1980s were in reaction to the economic hardship in the country and market liberalization in Jordan. In Iraq, the eight-year war with Iran had exhausted the country's economic resources and left it with a huge external debt and budget deficit. In addition, the demobilization of soldiers after the end of Iranian War also created a huge economic burden, especially in the cities. Syria, which supported Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, was also deprived of the income from Iraqi pipelines and cross-border trade. All three countries were facing the same structural problems in their economies in those years, including high unemployment with high rates of inflation and budget deficits in those years.

There were signs of possible social unrest in these countries as a result of these economic problems. Especially the increasing gap between rich and poor segments of their societies, the shortage of basic commodities, the increasing crisis in public sector and unemployment were endangering social stability. In addition, all three leaders were facing some urgent political problems, due to the influence of political developments in Central and Eastern Europe on Middle Eastern countries. Particularly, the overthrow and execution of Ceausescu in Romania caused the rise of dissident

voices among the societies of these countries and resulted in anxiety among these authoritarian leaders.

Finally, all three authoritarian leaders were in power at least 20 years when the Gulf War took place and consolidated their authorities in their countries. They were also predominant leaders. They had the authority and power to commit their countries' resources to the particular foreign policy choices of their own. They had the final say in foreign and security matters and no other actor or entity had authority to revoke their decisions. They were also interested in foreign policy and using their authorities by actively engaging in implementation of foreign policy. Among those three leaders Al-Bakr and Saddam Hussein came to power with a relatively bloodless coup in 1968. Although the July Revolution brought the Ba'ath Party into power, it did not give the Ba'ath Party enough power to make its desired changes and reforms. The operational and organizational skills that Saddam Hussein had developed over the years, as well as his ruthlessness, were needed in order to eliminate the challengers and to keep the Ba'ath Party in power. The coup was achieved with the help of non-Ba'athists who were against some of the ideological tenets of Ba'athism. Two weeks after the coup, Al-Bakr, with the help of Saddam Hussein, coordinated another coup to remove the non-Ba'athists from the new government. After the removal of the non-Ba'athist elements from the government, Al-Bakr rewarded Saddam with the second highest position in the government, namely the Deputy Chairmanship of the Revolutionary Command Council.<sup>22</sup>

Once he became the number two official in the country, Saddam Hussein's primary goal became to secure his position and prevent any form of plot against the government. By then, he had acquired

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<sup>22</sup> It was an expected and reasonable decision for both Hussein and Al-Bakr. "Both were relatives and fellow Tikritis and both had known each other well for a long time. Bakr had closely followed Hussein's personal development from a young boy at Khairallah Talfah's home to an efficient apparatchik at the party's supreme organ" (Karsh and Rautsi, 35). In fact, for Bakr, Saddam was a person who could be trusted and who could get the job done. According to Aburish, the relationship between Saddam and Bakr evolved into a mutual dependence and a division of labor. It was reminiscent of the relationship between Stalin and Lenin.



substantial experience and expertise in overthrowing governments, organizing coups and underground armed groups, and attempting to assassinate political leaders. He was aware of all the methods and strategies of anti-government groups and during his rule, he used his experience and knowledge to halt any possible coup attempts against his rule.<sup>23</sup> He was extremely successful in his campaigns to crack down on the opposition.<sup>24</sup> He imprisoned, tortured, and assassinated many individuals that could possibly challenge his power. He also cleared the path to become the president by accusing possible rivals of plotting against the regime and eliminating them. He did not commit these brutal acts in secret. He usually ordered the videotaping of the brutal punishments and he distributed them throughout the country to show the consequences of opposition to his rule.

Al-Bakr and Hussein made significant domestic economic and social achievements during their tenure as first and second in command, respectively. The nationalization of the oil industry and rising oil prices provided a major impetus for economic modernization and development programs, as well as government subsidies in different sectors. In addition to advances in agriculture and industry, “the Ba’athists oversaw the development of major programs of social welfare, health care, education, and a vast array of free services like distribution of radio and television sets”

(Mohamedou, 1998; 180-181). Throughout the 1970s, the government passed a series of laws

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<sup>23</sup> In an interview, Saddam Hussein stated his intention to create a coup-free Iraq, by saying that “with our party methods, there is no chance for anyone who disagrees with us to jump on a couple of tanks and overthrow the government.” In fact, he was saying that he would not let anyone do what he did in July 1968 (Coughlin, 91).

<sup>24</sup> He had many reasons to feel insecure in his first days in office. He was not a member of the military. He was not well-educated. He did not finish his law degree in Cairo. Furthermore, a coup was not a healthy way of transitioning of power and in the Iraq context, the coup often yielded temporary results. Moreover, there were several coup attempts in the first years of the Ba’ath government. A coup attempt against Saddam and Bakr was made in January 1970 by several high level military officers. Although it ultimately failed, it was evidence of potent threats to the regime. In fact, Saddam Hussein was realistic about the threats to his life and his regime. In an anecdote about his discussion with the leader of a tribe, Saddam Hussein stated, “I am too important and too well-protected. Should Allah forbid, our regime be overthrown, you will have to wait in line to get me. Thousands are ahead of you in wanting to kill Saddam Hussein” (Aburish, 2001: 93).

making primary education compulsory and free for all Iraqis (Baram, 1980; Roy, 1993: 167). The government also passed several laws that provided gender equality and encouraged women to join the education campaign (Balaghi, 2008: 54-55). Hussein also created in Iraq the most modernized public health system in the Middle East and tried to give government support to farmers and diversify the economy in order to rescue it from the monopoly of the oil industry. He even earned an award from UNESCO for his work in the public sector. In July 1979, after an eleven-year presidency, Al-Bakr appeared on television and announced his resignation. Immediately after this resignation, Saddam was elected as the president of Iraq.<sup>25</sup> During his years as the vice-president and president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein was involved in the formulation and implementation of each and every important foreign policy decision of the Iraqi government. Especially after becoming the president, he made the major foreign policy decisions of Iraq himself, including attacking Iran, suspending relations with Syria and later invading Kuwait.

King Hussein's road to consolidate his power also included important foreign and domestic foreign policy decisions. When Hussein became King of Jordan, there were some serious foreign and domestic problems on the agenda. The first and most significant problem was the question of the Palestinian refugees. The refugees, most of whom had been settled along the border with Israel, were not only causing political and economic problems for Jordan, but were also straining the already fragile relations between Jordan and Israel. The skirmishes between Palestinian groups and

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<sup>25</sup> According to the majority of scholars, the turnover of power from Al-Bakr to Hussein was a silent coup organized by Hussein and it was Hussein who ordered Al-Bakr to go home under guard (Aburish, 2001: 169). In 1979, Iraq and Syria were on the verge of a unification agreement that would have marginalized Saddam Hussein. Al-Bakr would have been the president of the Republic, and Assad would have been his vice-president. Saddam Hussein acted decisively before the union agreement was signed and forced President Al-Bakr to resign.

In Saddam Hussein's semi-official biography, Al-Bakr was mentioned as a sick man who could not run the affairs of the government in an era when the Arab world needed a young and energetic leader (Matar, 1981: 51-53).

Israeli forces on the Jordan – Israel border, as well as the hot pursuit of Israeli soldiers, were particularly resulting in severe foreign policy crises for Hussein and endangering the territorial integrity of the country. Secondly, the overthrow of the monarchy in Egypt by Nasser and his pan-Arab politics were major sources of concern for the future of the monarchy. The Palestinians, in particular, were influenced by Nasser's discourse and this factor threatened to trigger a wave of instability in Jordan.<sup>26</sup>

With the 1956 Suez Crisis, Arab-Israeli relations became the most important item on King Hussein's foreign policy agenda. This crisis also resulted in the formation of different alignments in the Arab world. During the crisis, Hussein symbolically supported Egypt but chose to remain inactive militarily, which further angered Nasser. Relations between Jordan and Egypt became even worse in 1959, when the security apparatus of Jordan uncovered a Nasserite plan to overthrow King Hussein. Hussein's relations with Iraq were also not stable during these years. King of Iraq Faisal II of Iraq was a cousin and childhood friend of Hussein, and they had been enthroned on the same day and had had very friendly relations. The two countries had even discussed a unification agreement in mid-1950s. However, the coup d'état by Qassem in 1958 ruined their plans. Furthermore, the execution of King Faisal II and his family and the mutilation of his body traumatized Hussein.<sup>27</sup>

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26 According to Cunningham, "Many of the Palestinian refugees were politically sophisticated and experienced compared with their East Bank counterparts, and were keenly aware of the larger nationalist and Pan-Arabist tides sweeping the region. Palestinian pressures for political inclusion in their newly adopted state fostered the political activism and string nationalist and leftist tides that confronted the King by 1956, a challenge that almost ended the Hashemite Monarchy and the King's life" (1997: 58).

27 Avi Shlaim underlined the importance of this event to Hussein's life. For Shlaim :

The grief he felt at the loss of his cousin Faisal seared itself in his mind. Hussein and Faisal had been the best of friends: they were born the same year, and were at Harrow together; their fathers were first cousins and best friends; their grandmothers were sisters; and they became kings on the same day. Prince Talal once asked his uncle what was the most difficult experience that he had gone through in his life. There were so many things Hussein could have said: the assassination of King Abdullah , the June War and the loss of Jerusalem, the death of his wife Alia... But Hussein answered

In 1967, King Hussein signed a defense agreement with Nasser's Egypt, months before the Six Days War. The agreement involved many policy concessions to Nasser and put the Jordanian army under the command of an Egyptian general. With the beginning of the war between Egypt/Syria and Israel, King Hussein found himself in a difficult situation. Israel had constantly warned Hussein not to involve Jordan in the dispute. Although he was not willing to make a premature move, he was under strong social pressure from both his people and the Arab public in general. Despite his reluctance, the Jordanian army under the leadership of the Egyptian general attacked Israel. It was not a well-planned and coordinated attack and the underequipped Jordanian army was defeated by the Israeli forces in a very short period of time. The West Bank and Jerusalem were invaded by Israeli forces as a result of the war. Moreover, around 300,000 Palestinians escaped from the Israeli forces, migrated to Jordan and settled in refugee camps.

The loss of Palestinian territories and the new wave of Palestinian refugees generated a new and more serious domestic challenge for King Hussein in 1970s. The Palestinian refugees were reluctant to integrate into Jordanian society and showed little interest in becoming "Jordanian." Their priority was staying in Jordan until they could go back to their homes in the West Bank (Thompson 1999: 104). This conflict between the Palestinian groups and King Hussein reached its peak in 1970, when militants from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) made several attempts to assassinate King Hussein. After the first assassination attempt in June, King Hussein tried to appease these groups and negotiate with them to reconcile differences. However, in September, the PFLP tried to assassinate him again by ambushing his car. Hussein barely escaped from the attack and it caused him to consider harsher responses toward these groups. When, in the same month, the PFLP hijacked several Western airplanes and landed them in Jordan, Hussein made the decision to

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that the worst thing was the loss of his cousin Faisal and the manner in which he and his whole family were murdered. This was the thing that grieved him the most in his lifetime" (2008: 167).

suppress these groups altogether. In a very bold political move, he ordered a widespread and comprehensive operation to eradicate the Palestinian armed groups and militia from Jordan and won a decisive victory against these groups.

In the Yom Kippur War, the Jordanian army only peripherally helped Syrian forces and was not involved in any clashes with Israel (Cunningham, 1997; 102). Hussein's neutral position and his reluctance to join in an armed conflict with Israel were interpreted as a betrayal by Jordan of the Arab cause. Arab countries made Hussein pay for this independent stand at the Rabat Conference in 1974 by declaring the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Through this declaration, King Hussein lost his status as the representative and protector of Palestinian people in the occupied territories. This decision not only weakened Jordan's status in regional politics, but also resulted in legitimacy problems within Jordan, where Palestinian refugees constituted the majority of the population.

In the 1980s, the Middle East was in the midst of multiple conflicts. The Arab-Israeli conflict spread to Lebanon in the early 1980s and Syria became part of this conflict. In addition, Jordan's eastern neighbor Iraq was in conflict with Iran. In the occupied territories, the *intifada* started in the late 1980s and its repercussions shook the foundations of the Hashemite monarchy. In addition, Jordan was also experiencing important domestic economic and social problems. The declining oil prices in the mid 1980s had an especially damaging impact on the Jordanian economy. Amid all these conflicts, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was just another stumbling block for King Hussein, who was trying to ensure the stability of his country and survival of his regime.

Al-Assad had also experienced similar forms of political and social crisis when he was consolidating his power in Syria. He started to climb to power with a coup organized by Ba'athist in 1963. After this coup he was appointed as a commander of the major airfield of the Syrian air force and in a

very short period of time, he gained total control of the Syrian Air Force. The pragmatic and astute political maneuvers that al-Assad implemented brought him to the center of power after the coup of February 23, 1966. This coup made al-Assad second in-command in the new Ba'ath regime with the title of defense minister (Ma'oz, 1988: 35).

The 1967 war between Israel and Arab countries was a turning point for al-Assad. After the defeat of the Arab armies, a dispute erupted within the party on how to pursue foreign policy towards Israel and Palestinians. The civil war in neighboring Jordan particularly divided the Syrian ruling elite. Assad was reluctant to directly intervene in Jordan in support of the Palestinian fedayeen. When his stand was rejected by his colleagues in the Syrian government and the Syrian army entered Jordan, al-Assad refused to provide air cover for the military and forced the military to return to Syria without interfering in the conflict in Amman. Shortly after this incident, he seized control of the party apparatus by an intra-party coup and in 1971 he became the president of Syria.

When he became president, one of al-Assad's most important goals was to regain control of the Golan Heights, which Syria had lost during the 1967 war. He believed that if he could attack Israel with a reliable and powerful ally, he could regain some of these territories.<sup>28</sup> In order to achieve his goal, in 1973, al-Assad joined his forces with Egypt in the war against Israel. Although he failed to recover the lost territories, the end of the war raised al-Assad's stature in the international arena. Despite this failure, after the war, he continuously increased his military power. He particularly tried to increase Syria's military strength after the Camp David meetings between Egypt and Israel in order to serve as a counterweight to Israel's power in the region.

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28 For Seale, one other reason for his belligerence against Israel was the influence of Nasser on him. Al-Assad became the president in the year that Nasser died and the Arab world was feeling the absence of a charismatic leader, who could carry the flag of Pan-Arabism in the Middle East. Most Arab leaders, including al-Assad, were dreaming to close this gap by filling the position of Nasser (Seale, 185- 186).

In addition to Israel, Syria also had had cold relations with Iraq because of the rivalry among the different branches of the Ba'ath Party. In addition, Syria had had territorial problems with its northern neighbor Turkey since the annexation of Alexandretta by Turkey in 1930s. Furthermore, Lebanon was a region that had been carved from the territories of Syria and its pro-Western government represented an ideological threat for al-Assad's regime. In order to defend Syria against these external threats and to protect the survival of his regime against domestic opponents, al-Assad built one of the most effective and powerful military institutions in the Middle East. After he became president, he allocated the majority of the state budget to military renovation and rebuilding. According to Ma'oz, at some point, it reached 71 percent of the budget, a proportion that no country in the world had ever reached (Ma'oz, 1988: 58).

Al-Assad's these policies were also geared toward preparation for another war against Israel in order to regain the Golan Heights. However, he knew that to defeat Israel, he needed allies in the Arab world. Therefore, al-Assad initiated military alliance talks with Sadat and after long consultations and discussions, the two leaders agreed to attack Israel on Yom Kippur. Although the joint Arab attack caught Israeli forces by surprise, in a short period of time, Israeli forces turned the tide and acquired more territory than they had during the 1967 war. At an important juncture of the war, Sadat unilaterally declared a ceasefire and left Syria alone against Israel, which caused Syrian forces to lose more territories. Although the war was a costly one for Syria, it provided an important source of legitimacy for al-Assad domestically. The end of the war and the negotiations for peace agreements were turning points in Middle Eastern history. The Egyptian attempt to strike a separate peace deal with Israel despite the opposition of all of the other Arab nations, in particular, changed the political landscape in the region. Al-Assad, who was a firm believer in Arab unity, thought that this act was a betrayal of the Arab world and pan-Arab principles, as well as of the Palestinian struggle.

After the 1973 war, Egypt lost all hope of recovering lost territories through armed struggle. However, al-Assad was still optimistic about recovering lost territories for Syria through an armed confrontation. One aspect of his strategy was his “Greater Syria” approach. He wanted to extend his borders or at least his zone of influence to historical Syria, which was comprised of Jordan, Lebanon, as well as the occupied territories of Palestine. The Lebanese venture was the most complicated among these regional policies of his. In the mid 1970s, under the pretext of stopping the civil war in Lebanon, Syria sent its troops to the neighboring land. Initially, this was intended as a limited military operation of peace-building with the authorization of the Arab League. However, in a short period of time, Syria became a party to the war and consolidated its position within Lebanon.

In the early 1980s, the major domestic problem that al-Assad faced was the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic opposition to his regime. The assassinations and violent reaction against al-Assad regime’s repressive policies within Syria reached its peak during these years. Al-Assad reacted to the resistance of this organization with disproportional use of force. The casualty numbers were never released but estimates changed between 10,000 and 30,000. Although this attack ended the strength of the Brotherhood in Syria, it led to the isolation of al-Assad both domestically and regionally. Al-Assad tried to regain the influence that he used to have in Middle Eastern politics through using unconventional methods, including providing logistical and material support to guerilla organization. Although the international community condemned many of the acts perpetrated by Syrian government, al-Assad continued to increase its effect in the Middle East through these mechanisms.

### **Research Design**

This dissertation will contribute to the methodological advancement of diversionary literature by using a structured, focused comparative study (George, 1979; George and Bennett, 2005), which has



thus far not been present throughout most of the literature. 29 The literature has an ample number of individual case studies and large-n quantitative studies, but other than a few recently-written dissertations on the presidential use of force in the US, scholars have not employed comparative studies (Williams, 2000; Bronson, 1997). As a result, the complexities of the decision making process and the possible differences among diversionary decisions in different countries, and within the same country among different time periods, have not been significantly explored. A comparative case study will help us to see the applicability of the research design and theory of diversionary studies to countries other than the US.

The structured, focused comparison that will be employed in this research will improve the methodology of diversionary studies by responding to the shortcomings of individual case studies and large-n quantitative researches. Firstly, individual case studies in foreign policy studies have often been criticized for being non-cumulative (Rosenau, 1969; King, Keohane and Verba, 1994). Scholars agree that these case studies have provided important insights and information about individual cases and made important contributions to the current knowledge; but again, the lack of systematic comparisons in these studies make them less cumulative (George and Bennett, 2005; Rosenau, 1969), and more descriptive and monographic (Macridis and Brown, 1955). The literature is full of these individual case studies that examine particular international conflicts through process tracing. These studies provide important information about the causes of conflict and decision making mechanisms within governments. However, they mostly aim to either test the diversion

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29 According George and Bennett, "The method and logic of structured, focused comparison is simple and straightforward. The method is structured in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is focused in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined. The requirements for structure and focus apply equally to individual cases since they may later be joined by additional cases" (2005: 67).

theory or to demonstrate the explanatory power of the theory through a single case. Structured, focused comparison helps us to yield a more generalizable set of data and to develop a theoretical framework for the subject matter.

However, while responding to the limitations of the employment of individual case studies and large-n quantitative research in the field, the structured, focused comparison also borrows some important insights from them. Firstly, just like individual case studies, the structured focused comparison enables the researcher to get in-depth knowledge about cases and provide information about the intricacies of decision making. However the structured, focused comparisons is different from single case studies in the sense that it takes into account a number of specific, comparable cases, which will in the long run pave the way for the development of theory in this field. Secondly, the structured, focused comparison “borrows the device of asking a set of standardized, general questions of each case” from the statistical models (George and Bennett, 2005: 69). However, it describes the explanatory variables in greater detail than a summary of statistical information could provide (Williams, 2000).

The method of structured, focused comparison is going to be utilized in order to conduct an examination of three diversionary foreign policy decisions made by three leaders (Hafiz al-Assad, Saddam Hussein and King Hussein) from three different countries (Syria, Iraq and Jordan) during the Gulf War and its immediate aftermath. The questions set forth below will be asked in each and every case in order to assess the relationship between leadership traits and selection of diversionary actions. Before proceeding to the questions, the dependent and independent variables of the study will be discussed.

### **Questions**

As mentioned above, this dissertation employs Alexander George's structured, focused comparison. To conduct this research and study, and to ensure that the case studies were indeed comparable, I needed a list of standardized questions. These questions were brought together by taking into account the theoretical focus of this research. Some of them are intended to provide background information about the case and the decision context.

1-) What are the domestic circumstances that made the leader to use one of the diversionary strategies?

2-) What was the authoritative decision unit in this case?

3-) What were the leadership styles of the political leader?

4-) How does the leader divert the attention of the domestic public?

Did he use one of the conflictual strategies?

Did he use one of the cooperative strategies?

Did he use both of these strategies at the same time?

5-) What is the relationship between the leadership styles and the selection of different forms of diversionary foreign policy?

1. What is the relationship between challenging/respecting constraint and the diversionary behavior?

2. What is the relationship between openness/closeness to information and the diversionary behavior?

3. What is the relationship between the task motivation of the leader and the diversionary behavior?
4. What is the relationship between the motivations of the political leader towards the world and the diversionary behavior?

### **Dependent Variable**

For many years, the dependent variable of mainstream diversionary studies has been either war or another form of external use of force. In this study, I extend the scope of the dependent variable to integrate theories from the literature on domestic politics and international conflict interaction and literature on the public opinion and foreign policy nexus into diversionary scholarship. The dependent variables of this study will be the following different diversionary strategies -- “use of conflictual diversionary strategy”, “use of cooperative diversionary strategy” and “use of multiple strategies including both conflictual and cooperative diversionary strategies.”

In order to solve the problem of categorizing various different foreign policy actions as cooperative or conflictual, I used the *Conflict and Peace Databank*’s coding of international events. (Azar, 1980) This dataset categorizes events along a continuum from the “most hostile” to “the friendliest.” The continuum has fifteen different points. This fifteen-point scale may be divided into two general categories of “conflict” and “cooperation”:

Conflict	Cooperation
<p>a. Extensive war acts causing deaths, dislocation or high strategic costs, including: full-scale air, naval, and land battles; invasion; and bombing of military installations.</p> <p>b. Limited acts of war including: intermittent shelling or clashes; and sporadic bombing of military or industrial areas.</p> <p>c. Small-scale military acts, including: limited air, sea, and border skirmishes; and material support of subversive activities against the target country.</p> <p>d. Political-military hostile actions, including: inciting riots; encouraging guerilla activities; breaking diplomatic relations; and expelling military advisors.</p> <p>e. Diplomatic-economic hostile actions, including: increasing troop mobilization; staging boycotts; imposing economic sanctions; embargoing goods; and refusing to support foreign military allies.</p> <p>f. Strong verbal expressions displaying hostility in the interaction, including: threatening retaliation for acts; making threatening demands and accusations; and condemning specific actions.</p> <p>g. Mild verbal expressions displaying discord in the interaction: Low key objection to policies; unofficial and official, including diplomatic notes of protest.</p>	<p>a. Minor official exchanges/talks and mild verbal support of policy, including: meetings with high-level officials; conferring on problems of mutual interest; issuing joint communiqués; proposing talks; and requesting support for policy.</p> <p>b. Official verbal support of goals, values, or regime, including: officially supporting policy; reaffirming friendship; asking for help against a third party; and resuming broken relations.</p> <p>c. Cultural or scientific agreement or support (non-strategic), including: initiating diplomatic relations; proposing or offering economic or military aid; and visits by head of state.</p> <p>d. Non-military economic, technological or industrial agreement, including: making economic loans and grants; economic pacts; and giving industrial or cultural assistance.</p> <p>e. Military economic or strategic support: providing air, naval, or land facilities for bases; giving technical military assistance; intervening with military support; concluding military agreements; training military personnel.</p> <p>f. Major strategic alliances (regional or international), including: fighting a war jointly; establishing a joint military command or alliance; and joining international alliances.</p> <p>g. Voluntary unification into one nation, including: merging voluntarily into one nation-state; and forming one nation with one legally binding government.</p>

### **Independent Variables**

The independent variables of this study will be similar to the independent variables used previously by scholars in the field of diversionary theory war. Since the inception of more systemic studies on the diversionary theory of war, most of the scholars used domestic problems that leaders face in their countries as the independent variables of their study. Following this pattern, in this study, independent variables will be various sorts of domestic problems that leaders face in their countries, including domestic social problems, such as riots, rebellions and ethnic, religious and sectarian conflicts, domestic economic problems, such as rising inflation and unemployment, high foreign debt and budget deficits and domestic political problems, such as legitimacy crisis, political scandals, emergence of a strong opposition and problems in terms of controlling the military.

### **Intervening Variables**

The intervening variables of this study will be the leadership styles of the three Middle Eastern leaders. Although all three Middle Eastern leaders in this study were predominant leaders, significant differences existed in their leadership styles. This study argues that the differences among the leadership styles of these leaders can account to differences in the use of diversionary strategies. In order to reveal the effects of leadership styles on the selection of diversionary strategies, first the leadership styles of these three individual leaders will be analyzed through content analysis of their interview responses. After this, the relationship between these leadership styles and the selection of different diversionary strategies will be assessed.

Leadership style is defined as “the ways in which leaders relate to those around them- whether constituents, advisers, or other leaders- and how they structure interactions and the norm, rules, and principles they use to guide such interactions” (Hermann, 2005a: 181). Previous research in the field

of leadership studies demonstrate that leadership style usually affects the manner in which a political leader deals with political problems and crises, and also the nature of the decision making process that the leader adopts. Hermann, in her three-decade long research on political leadership and leadership traits found a set of leadership traits that guides how leaders interact with those they lead and with whom they share power. According to her, leadership styles are built around the answers to three main questions, which are “1-) How do leaders react to political constraints in their environment—do they respect or challenge such constraints? 2-) How open are leaders to incoming information—do they selectively use information or are they open to information directing their response? 3-) What motivates leaders to take action—are they driven by an internal focus of attention or by responses from salient constituents?” (Hermann, 2001: 90). For Hermann, the answers to these three questions provide information regarding the sensitivity of the leader to the political context and the degree to which he or she will want to control what happens or be an agent for the viewpoints of others. Knowledge about how leaders react to constraints, process information, and are motivated to deal with their political environments are usually discovered by analyzing seven different traits of their political personalities. These are:

(1) the belief that one can influence or control what happens, (2) the need for power and influence, (3) conceptual complexity (the ability to differentiate things and people in one’s environment), (4) self confidence, (5) the tendency to focus on problem solving and accomplishing something versus maintenance of the group and dealing with others’ ideas and sensitivities, (6) general distrust and suspiciousness of others, and (7) the intensity with which a person holds an in-group bias (Hermann, 2003: 184).

### **Leadership Styles**

### *Challenging the Constraints*

The attitude of a leader towards constraints plays a definitive role in his political behavior. The constraints can include public opinion, power-sharing arrangements, such as checks and balances, and opposition groups, such as social movements and political parties (Keller, 2005: 837). Previous research on challenging constraints demonstrates that leaders who challenge constraints usually see these constraints as obstacles that need to be overcome in order to achieve their policy goals. These leaders usually prefer to meet a situation head-on and achieve a quick resolution. On the other hand, leaders who respect constraints are more empathetic to their environments and seek the support of the people around them. They are usually more open to trade-offs and bargaining (Hermann, 2001; Kaarbo and Hermann 1998; Hermann 2005a). To understand whether a leader challenges or respects constraints, scholars have analyzed the relationship between two leadership traits, namely the degree of the leader's belief in controlling events and the extent of the leader's need for power.

The need for power involves "a concern for establishing, maintaining, or restoring one's power; in other words, it is the desire to control, influence, or have an impact on other persons or groups" (Hermann, 2005b: 190). Leader with high drives and great needs for power usually try to have influence on foreign policy decisions. They may use various strategies, including manipulating the environment, sizing up opportunities, and working behind the scenes. They are flexible about the rules. Their rules may change if their interests change. They are willing to circumvent their constraints in the pursuit of their own objectives (Shannon and Keller, 2007: 85). In fact, these leaders "will test the limits before adhering to a course of action, bartering and bargaining up until the last moment in order to see what is possible and what the consequences will be of pushing further toward their goals" (Hermann, 2005b: 190). When the score for the "need for power" is low for a certain leader, he is usually willing to delegate to others and to give credit to others for the



government's achievements. Such a leader considers his subordinates his equals and tries to foster a group spirit. Shared responsibility and shared accountability are particularly important to such a leader. According to scholars, a strong need for power is linked to autocratic decision making methods and suppression of dissent (Preston, 2001; Shannon and Keller, 2007: 85).

The second leadership trait, namely, the belief in the ability to control events is “a view of the world in which individuals and governments can exercise some degree of control over the situation in which they find themselves” (Shannon and Keller: 85) Leaders who registers high scores in “belief in the ability to control events” are very interested in foreign policy making processes and are actively involved in the orientation and implementation of their countries' foreign policies. Such leaders want to be in total control of all steps of the foreign policy making in their country. Instead of delegating authority, they choose to be in charge of every policy move. In addition “because such leaders are so sure that they can have an impact on the world, they are less prone to compromise or work out a deal with others. Once they decide, they exude confidence in their decision-they know what should be done” (Hermann, 2005b: 189). On the other hand, leaders who register low scores in “belief in the ability to control events” are more reactive and less proactive in the foreign policy realm. They only want to participate in the foreign policy decision making process when there is at least a 50% chance of success (Hermann, 2001). They prefer others to take responsibility and prefer to delegate authority. Because of this, in the case of policy failures, they can easily push the blame on others and scapegoat the people who took charge in making and implementing the foreign policy decisions.

Leaders who score high both in “the need for power” and “belief in the ability to control events” challenge the constraints around them. They also push the limits of what is possible and available to them. Leaders who score low in both of these traits respect constraints and try to act within the

parameters of constraints. Leaders who score moderately in both of these traits may choose to challenge or respect the constraint depending on the situation and context. When the leader's belief in his ability to control events is high and his need for power is low to moderate, the leader will take charge and challenge constraints but he will be too direct in his challenge and open to use force if needed. In these circumstances the leader will not do well in setting behind the scenes maneuvers and manipulating others. On the other hand, when a leader's need for power is high and his belief in his ability to control events is low, he will be more skillful in challenging constraints indirectly. For Hermann, such leaders are more comfortable challenging constraints from behind the scenes. They are usually the people who are "behind the throne" pulling the strings and not being accountable for the results (Hermann, 2005b: 188).

### ***Openness to Information***

Openness to information plays an important part in shaping leaders' foreign policy orientation. Leaders who are open to information are usually open to contextual cues and advice from experts and advisors. They also take into account the arguments of the important opinion leaders in their society. They want to know the different alternatives and viewpoints and they welcome different suggestions, even if the suggestions are contrary to their own opinions. They are usually cue-takers, who make their final decisions after hearing and considering different policy options.

On the other hand, leaders who are close to the information usually take office with certain strong and rigid political opinions. They are usually advocates and they look for information that supports and strengthens their arguments and policy positions. They most often ignore and prefer not to pay attention to views that are contradictory to their strongly held beliefs (Hermann, 2001; Hermann and Kaarbo, 1998; Stewart, Hermann and Hermann, 1989 ; Hermann 2005a). Scholars have noted the influence of openness to contextual information on a leader's foreign policy decision

making. For example, Hermann stated, “How leaders’ sensitivity to the political context and information about what is happening politically can influence when contextual factors are likely to shape how they engage in decision making” (Hermann, 1994: 367). Leaders’ openness to contextual information is determined by the relationship of two leadership traits, namely the level of self-confidence and the conceptual complexity.

Self-confidence is “one’s sense of self importance, an individual’s image of his or her ability to cope adequately with objects and persons in the environment” (Hermann, 2005b: 194). Leaders with high self-confidence are immune to incoming information from their environments, including from their advisors and from journalists. They think that they have sufficient knowledge about situations and they trust their understanding of the world and their solutions to particular problems. Even when they get new information, they perceive the information according to their own beliefs and thoughts. Leaders who have low self-confidence, on the other hand, are open to information and advice from the outside. Such leaders “tend to continually seek out information from the environment in order to know what to do and how to conform to the demands of the circumstances which they find themselves” (Hermann, 2001: 22). They sometimes behave inconsistently due to the existence of various difference viewpoints on particular subjects.

Conceptual complexity is “the degree of differentiation that an individual shows in describing or discussing other people, places, policies, ideas, or things” (Hermann, 2005b: 195). It is one of the most frequently studied attributes of political leadership.<sup>30</sup> According to scholars, low conceptual complexity is indicative of situations in which leaders see the world as black and white. Such leaders

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30 . For examples of the works that focus on conceptual complexity, see Dille Brian and Michael D. Young. 2000. “The Conceptual Complexity of Presidents Carter and Clinton: An Automated Content Analysis of Temporal Stability and Source Bias”; Thies, Cameron G. 2009. “The Conceptual Complexity of Central Bankers and the Asian Financial Crisis”; Gutteri, Karen, Michael D Wallace and Peter Suedfield. 1995. “The Integrative Complexity of American Decision Makers in the Cuban Missile Crisis”.

prefer to reach quick decisions and spend relatively little time on deliberation. Usually, they prefer action to thinking and deliberations. For them, it is relatively easier to decide on a solution to a foreign policy problem. They are also more likely to use forceful policy instruments than other leaders (Hermann, 1984; Preston, 2001). For leaders who possess higher conceptual complexity, the world is more ambiguous; there are more gray areas than black or white situations. Such a leader “can see varying reasons for a particular position, is willing to entertain the possibility that there is ambiguity in the environment, and is flexible in reacting to objects or ideas” (Hermann, 2001: 22). These leaders also prefer to listen to a wide array of viewpoints and engage with different people on particular subjects, and only after doing those things, make a decision.

Leaders whose “conceptual complexity” scores are higher than their “self-confidence” scores are more open to information and more pragmatic with regard to contextual cues. They are more open and accessible for their advisers, and they also listen to people with different opinions (Hermann, 2005: 193). When faced with a foreign policy problem, such leaders prefer to follow signals from society, the opposition, and their advisory groups. The reactions of these groups to an issue are significant to the leader.

Leaders whose “self-confidence” scores are higher than their “conceptual complexity” scores are generally more closed to information. They are motivated mostly by causes and ideologies, instead of by situational clues. They are self-confident about their ideologies and believe that their courses of action are the best. They are more likely to use coercive measures in order to force others to conform to their views. Information that reaches such leaders is mostly ignored or selected by the leaders in accordance with their views and ideologies. They organize their decision making in manners that put them at the top of the hierarchy and provide them with full control of the decision making environments (Hermann, 2001).

If both the leaders' "self-confidence" and "conceptual complexity" scores are high, they are usually more open and strategic and they try to figure out the best possible options for particular points of time. On the other hand, low scores in both traits reflect more closed attitudes to contextual information. Such leaders are also inclined to easily lock into particular positions that seem likely to be successful (Hermann, 2005).

### ***Motivation for Seeking Office***

The trait of task motivation is related to the leader's reason for seeking office. This trait focuses on the significance that a leader gives to a particular problem or goal and to the solution of the problem versus the significance that a leader gives to his constituents, their needs, and their loyalties. In other words, a leader may be driven "either by an internal focus—a particular problem or cause, an ideology, a specific set of interests—or by the desire for a certain kind of feedback from those in their environment—acceptance approval, power, support, status, acclaim" (Hermann, 2005a: 184). A leader with a relatively high problem orientation concentrates on a particular goal and tries to mobilize his people in order to achieve that particular goal. People, politics, and coercive methods are all instruments for such a leader to accomplish his aim. The most important thing in the world for such a leader is the mission that he chooses, and he prefers people who follow his lead in pursuing his goals. On the other hand, a leader with relationship orientation is sensitive to his relationship with his people. He wants to maintain his constituents' loyalty and support. Although such a leader also has certain goals, he prefers to pursue his goals without losing the consent and support of his people. For him, leadership is all about fostering collegiality, mobilizing people, and fostering the participation of the people. According to Hermann, a leader who is in the middle of this spectrum is usually a charismatic leader. He takes into account both the problem and the relationships depending on the context (Hermann, 2005a).

### ***Motivation towards the World***

In Leadership Trait Analysis, the motivation of a leader in the world is measured by his scores on “in-group bias” and “distrust of others.” These scores indicate to the researcher “whether the leader is driven by threats or problems he or she perceives in the world or by opportunities to form cooperative relationships” (Hermann, 2005b: 199). In fact, they give a researcher an idea about the leader’s foreign policy - whether the leader is going to be confrontational or is going prefer to build friendly relations.

In-group bias is a view of the world in which “one’s group holds center stage. There are strong emotional attachments to this in group, and it is perceived as the best” (Hermann, 2005b: 201).

Leaders who possess such bias are often nationalistic leaders with exclusionary tendencies. Scholars have observed that leaders with high in-group bias and leaders with low in-group bias engage in particular foreign policy behaviors. Leaders with high in-group bias usually see the world as a conflict- prone environment with clear-cut boundaries between those “with us” and “against us”.

Such leaders want the members of their groups to feel absolute loyalty to their causes. Unity among the members of their groups is sacrosanct for achieving their causes. They do not tolerate any form of opposition or hindrance to the achievement of their causes and believe that any such opposition or hindrance must be eliminated. Such leaders also do not accept any form of weakness within their regimes or errors in the implementation of their policies.

Leaders with low in-group bias do still have patriotic feelings. They still have loyalty and devotion to their own groups, but see the world less in terms of black and white. They are “more willing to categorize people as we and them based on the nature of the situation or problem at hand so that such categories remain fluid and ever changing depending on what is happening in the world at the moment” (Hermann, 2005a: 190).

Distrust of others involves feelings of doubt, suspicion, and skepticism about others and their actions. Leaders with high distrust towards others are suspicious of the actions and motives of others, especially those who are in positions to challenge their authority and regimes. In its extreme forms, distrust of others turns into paranoia and distrust of everyone. Leaders with high distrust of others prefer to hire loyalists to their administrations and they usually try to handle the critical jobs themselves. They also “shuffle their advisers around, making sure that none of them is acquiring a large enough power base to challenge the leader’s authority....” and “..tend to be hypersensitive to criticism- often seeing criticism where others would not- and they are vigilant, always on the lookout for challenge to their authority or self” (Hermann, 2005b: 2003). Leaders with low distrust try to evaluate situations and people according to the contexts and their past experiences with them. Such leaders tend to trust or distrust people when there are some actual signs of betrayal or of attempts to overthrow. They tend to not subscribe to conspiracy theories.

Leaders with high in-group bias and high distrust of others tend to see the world in Hobbesian terms -- as conflict-prone and full of dangers. They believe that they are surrounded by adversaries who aim to extend their own powers or ideologies and destroy the leaders’ regimes. Therefore, the main focus of leaders with high in-group bias and high distrust of others is to eliminate potential problems. On the other hand, leaders with low in-group bias and low distrust of others tend not to see the world as a threatening place. They believe that cooperation is both possible and feasible in the international system. Between these two extremes are leaders with high in-group bias and low distrust of others and they tend to see politics as a zero-sum game. However, this game is constrained by some international norms. The focuses of such leaders are confronting threats, solving problems, and increasing the capabilities of their countries. On the other hand, leaders with low ingroup bias and high distrust of others focus on taking advantage of opportunities and building relationships while remaining vigilant of threats (Hermann, 2001).

## **The Determination of Leadership Styles**

There is a substantial body of literature on the impact of political leaders' personal characteristics on countries' foreign policy-making. For instance, Rosenau, in his seminal article on pre-theories and theories of foreign policy making, delineated a leader's personal characteristics as one of the five important variables that determine a nation's foreign policy (1966). In addition, other scholars, including Hermann (1963) and Holsti (1967), also underlined political leaders' leadership traits as a variable to explain the foreign policy behaviors of states.<sup>31</sup> In the late 1970s and 1980s, the study of political leaders' personality characteristics and their relationship to policy behavior became more systematic and "scientific" due to the advancement of different methodologies.<sup>32</sup> Two major streams of personality and leadership studies were developed in these years. Firstly, scholars began during these years to write psychobiographies of political leaders, in which they associated political leaders' policy preferences and leadership styles with their psychological development. The scholars in writing these psychobiographies were primarily influenced by George's psychobiography of Wilson (1956).<sup>33</sup> Their studies used psychological theory and research in order to explain political leaders' motivations. Most of these studies focused on the political leaders' entire lives and inferred certain psychological patterns and traits from their lives, such as Gartner's psychological biography

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31 For some of the earlier examples of studies on the relation between personal characteristics of political leaders and foreign policy, see Driver, M. J. 1977 "Individual differences as determinants of aggression in the Inter- nation Simulation," ; Hermann, M. G 1974 "Leader personality and foreign policy behavior"; Hermann, M. G. (1977) "Some personal characteristics related to foreign aid voting of congressmen"; Hermann, M. G. 1980 "Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders."

32 For a review of this literature, see Winter, David G. 2005. *Assessing Leaders' Personalities: A Historical Survey of Academic Research Studies*; Winter, David G. 1992. *Personality and Foreign Policy: Historical Overview*.

33 For a review and criticism to George's study see, Friedman, William. 1994. "Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House and Political Psychobiography."



of Clinton (2008)<sup>34</sup>, whereas others only focused on certain psychological traits of a political leader and tried to analyze those traits within the life stories of the leaders they profiled, such as Renshon's assessment of the Clinton presidency (1994 and 2000).<sup>35</sup> One of the prominent representatives of this genre in recent years has been Jerrold Post and his analysis of leadership psychologies and their impact on leaders' policies. Post, while analyzing the biographies of individual leaders, focused on certain constitutive moments and aspects of the leaders' lives, including his mentors, his education and childhood, and his life cycle. <sup>36</sup>

Another school of research on political leadership uses a different methodology, one involving analysis of to ascertain their personality traits and the impacts of those traits on their policies. The development of this form of analysis was mostly due to the difficulty of obtaining direct access to political leaders and of extracting honest answers from them, especially on politically sensitive issues.

In fact, as stated by Hermann (2005):

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34 For more examples, see Muslin, H. L. and Jobe, T. H. (1991). Lyndon Johnson: The Tragic Self: A Psychohistorical Portrait.; Weinstein, E. A. 1981. Woodrow Wilson: A Medical and Psychological Biography.

35 For more information on this methodology, see Mazlish, Bruce. 1994. "Some Observations on the Psychology of Political Leadership"; Stanley A. Renshon, 1996. *The Psychological Assessment of Presidential Candidates*; Stanley A. Renshon, 1992. *High Hopes: The Clinton Presidency and the Politics of Ambition* ; James David Barber, *Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*; Stanley A. Renshon, "Analyzing the Psychology and Performance of Presidential Candidates at a Distance: Bob Dole and the 1996 Presidential Campaign"; Bruce Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon: A Psychohistory Inquiry*; Birt, Raymond. 1993. "Personality and Foreign Policy: The Case of Stalin".

36 For examples of this form of at a distance assessments of political leadership traits, see Post, Jerrold M. 1991. Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychology Profile.; Post, Jerrold. M. 1983. "Woodrow Wilson Re-Examined: The Mind-Body Controversy Redux and Other Disputations"; Post, Jerrold. M. 1993. "The Defining Moment of Saddam's Life: A Political Psychology Perspective on the Leadership and Decision Making of Saddam Hussein During the Gulf Crisis"; Robbins, Robert S. and Jerrold M. Post. 1987. "The Paranoid Political Actor"; Post, Jerrold M. and Amatzia Baram. 2002. "Saddam is Iraq: Iraq is Saddam"; Post, Jerrold M. 1993.; Post, J. (1991b). "Saddam Hussein of Iraq: Afterword."; Post, Jerrold M. 2008. "Kim Jon-Il of North Korea: In the Shadow of His Father"; Kille, Kent J. and Roger M. Scully. 2003. "Executive Heads and the Role of Intergovernmental organizations: Expansionist Leadership in the United Nations and the European Union. Dyson, Stephen Benedict and Thomas Preston. 2006. "Individual Characteristics of Political Leaders and the Use of Analogy in Foreign Policy Decision Making."

It is hard to conceive of giving people like Tony Blair, Saddam Hussein or Boris Yeltsin a battery of psychological tests or having them submit a series of clinical interviews. Not only would they not have time for, or tolerate, such procedures, they would be wary that the results, if made public, might prove politically damaging to them (178).

Although there are some types of documents that can give the analysts information about the backgrounds and personal characteristics of leaders, such as biographies and autobiographies, they do have their own problems in terms of genuineness. Some biographies were written with strong biases against the leader, such as biographies of late president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein which were extremely popular in 1990s. Other biographies have problems with accuracy of information. Furthermore, autobiographies always have problems of self-promotion and self-defense, and most often they do not say many things about the personal weaknesses and failures of the writer. Considering these difficulties, scholars have tried to find other methods of analyzing political leaders' personal characteristics from a distance and without a requirement of direct interaction. One way that they have discovered has been to look at the words that a leader uses.

Presidents and political leaders leave behind more words than anyone else in the world. Their speeches, interviews, press conferences, and even cabinet discussions are recorded and archived. These words have constituted the basis of different methods of assessing their personal characteristics, including the operational code analysis developed by George (1969), Holsti (1970) and Walker (1983, 1990 and 2000; Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1999; Walker, and Falkowski, 1984;

Walker, Schafer and Young. 1998.), and the leadership trait analysis developed by Hermann (1980, 1987, 2001, 2005; Hermann and Preston. 1994). 37

This study will use the leadership trait analysis developed by Hermann (1980, 1987, 2001, 2005).

This method is based on analyzing the content of what political leaders say. In this method, political leaders' spontaneous interview responses are examined to assess their personality traits and leadership styles. Spontaneous materials are preferred by researchers because they minimize the effects of ghost writing and planned communication. According to Hermann, "materials, such as speeches and letters are often written for the head of government by others and are generally designed to convey a specific image to a certain audience. As a consequence, the researcher content analyzing these materials will learn what the ghost writer is like or what the image is which the political leader would like to reflect. In the press conference settings, the head of government is usually the author of his responses and often has little time in which to plan his response" (1980: 15) In addition, Hermann argued, "in the interview, political leaders are less in control of what they say and even though still in a public setting, more likely to evidence what they, themselves are like than is often possible when giving a speech" (2005a; 179). 38 The earlier studies on content analysis, such as Le Vine (1966), also revealed that the relationship between personal characteristics and

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37 For examples of at-a-distance assessments, see Winter, David G., Margaret G Hermann, Walter Weintraub, and Stephen Walker. 1991. "The Personalities of Bush and Gorbachev at a Distance: Follow-up on Predictions."; Kaarbo, Juliet. 1997. "Prime Minister Leadership Styles in Foreign Policy Decision making: A Framework for research"; Steinberg, Blema S. 2005. "Indira Gandhi: The Relationship between Personality Profile and Leadership Style"; Kimhi, Shaul. 2001. "Benjamin Netanyahu: A Psychological Profile Using Behavior Analysis"; Sigelman, Lee. 2002. "Two Reagans? Genre Imperatives, Ghostwriters, and Presidential Personality Profiling"; Dyson, Stephen Benedict. 2005. "Personality and Foreign policy: Tony Blair's Iraq Decisions"; Stewart, Phillip D., Margaret G. Hermann and Charles F. Hermann. 1989. "Modeling the 1973 Soviet Decision to Support Egypt"; Preston, Thomas and Paul't Hart. 1999. "Understanding and Evaluating Bureaucratic Politics: The Nexus Between Political Leaders and Advisory Systems"; Carter, Neal. 2008. "Investigating Stephan Harper: Personality as a Distance Profile".

38 For the analysis and comparison of the prepared and spontaneous remarks of the political leaders, see Dille, Brian. 2000. "The Prepared and Spontaneous Remarks of Presidents Reagan and Bush : A Validity comparison for at-a-distance Measurements".

spontaneous material is stronger than the link between personal characteristics and prepared material.

The interview responses of political leaders are used as the units of analysis for the leadership trait analysis in this study.<sup>39</sup> The interviews were collected from a single source -- the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report. All of the interviews were conducted during the Gulf Crisis or immediately after the Gulf War. In previous studies conducted by Hermann (2001), she has found that it is possible to develop an adequate assessment of leadership style based on fifty interview responses of one hundred words or more in length, which is accepted as a baseline for this research. This technique also involves comparisons of these scores with a broader population of leaders. When the mean score of a particular trait for a leader is one standard deviation or more above the score of the norming group for that trait, the leader is characterized as 'high' on that trait. When the leader's score for a particular trait is one standard deviation below the population's mean score or less for that trait, the leader is characterized as low on that trait. Finally when the leader's score is within one standard deviation of the population's mean score, the leader is characterized as moderate for that particular trait. In this study, the norming group for three leaders is Arab and Islamic leaders, which include scores for 44 Arab and Islamic leaders, in order to control cultural and some background characteristics.

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<sup>39</sup> In this study domestic interviews of the leaders were taken into account. However these interviews were later compared with the interviews of these leaders with foreign correspondents which were intended to target foreign audience. The results show no significant difference between the scores of the domestic and international interviews. Especially there was no significant change in the leadership styles of these leaders when they talked to Iraqi or foreign journalists.

Leadership Traits	Number of Leaders	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Belief in Controlling Events	44	0.24	0.45	0.32	0.04
Task Orientation	44	0.43	0.76	0.59	0.06
Distrust of Others	44	0.06	0.31	0.18	0.06
Conceptual Complexity	44	0.50	0.65	0.58	0.03
In-Group Bias	44	0.09	0.20	0.13	0.02
Self-Confidence	44	0.08	0.63	0.36	0.10
Need for Power	44	0.20	0.33	0.25	0.03

Table 1: Norming Score for Arab and Islamic Leaders

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SADDAM HUSSEIN OF IRAQ AND HIS DIVERSIONARY STRATEGIES**

Saddam Hussein, former president of Iraq, was one of the most controversial figures of Middle Eastern and world politics in the last decades of the twentieth century. In his tumultuous life, he was the vice president of the Republic for 11 years and then became the president of Iraq and ruled the country for 24 years. During his tenure as the president, the state of Iraq engaged in armed conflicts with two of its neighbors (its eastern neighbor Iran and its southern neighbor Kuwait) and was in constant conflict with its western neighbor Syria. The war with Iran lasted eight years (1980-1988) and was one of the longest and bloodiest conventional armed conflicts of the twentieth century. In 1990, two years after the cessation of conflicts with Iran, Saddam Hussein invaded his southern neighbor, Kuwait, which led to the First Gulf War. The war ended with the defeat of Iraqi forces by an international coalition, led by the United States. The rebellions of the Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq and Shi'a groups in the South after the defeat were suppressed by the internal security apparatus of Saddam Hussein's regime. After the Gulf War, Iraq faced one of the longest and harshest economic sanctions in the twentieth century. Despite the UN's oil-for-food program, the people of Iraq suffered grave humanitarian losses during these years.

Between 1991 and 2003, Saddam Hussein and Iraq were under constant surveillance by the international community and particularly by the United States. Iraq was hit several times militarily during this time period, including the 1993 attack by US forces and 1998's Operation Desert Fox by the United States and the United Kingdom. During this period, Iraq was also accused of not complying with the IAEA and developing weapons of mass destruction. The suspicions regarding Saddam Hussein's intentions led to the Second Gulf War in the post-9/11 environment. In a very short period of time, the US and its allies invaded Iraq and toppled the regime in Baghdad. Saddam Hussein was captured in December 2003 by US forces in Operation Red Dawn in the town of ad-Dawr near Tikrit. He was sentenced to death and executed in December 2006.

Saddam Hussein has been one of the most studied and written about political actors in Middle Eastern politics. His life, domestic struggles, and wars have been the subjects of numerous books and publications around the world. During his lifetime, especially after the First Gulf War, numerous biographies were written on his life and they were widely read and circulated among Western readers.<sup>40</sup> In addition, almost every Western broadcasting network has produced a documentary about Saddam Hussein's life. These documentaries have included but have not been limited to *House of Saddam* (2008) by BBC and HBO, *Saddam Hussein-Defying the World* by ITN, *Why Can't They Kill Saddam?* (2008), *Saddam's Secret Tunnels* (2007) and *Saddam's Bombmaker: Escape to Freedom* (2006) by the History Channel. Even after his death, interest in Saddam Hussein's life and politics did not vanish. Recently, new books and reports have been published regarding his personal and political life, including a book by his American army-nurse during his detention (Ellis, 2009) and another by a

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40. Some of the example of Saddam's biographies include Aburish, Said K. 2001. *Saddam Hussein The Politics of Revenge*. Balaghi, Shiva. 2008. *Saddam Hussein: A Biography*. ; Cockburn, Andrew, and Patrick Cockburn. 2000. *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein*.; Coughlin, Con. 2005. *Saddam His Rise and Fall*.; Karsh, Efraim, and Inari Rautsi. 2002. *Saddam Hussein A Political Biography* ; MacKey, Sandra. *The Reckoning Iraq and the Legacy of Saddam Hussein*.; Myerson, Daniel. *Blood and Splendor the Lives of Five Tyrants, from Nero to Saddam Hussein*.; Post, Jerrold M. *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders With Profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton*.

Special Operations flight surgeon (Green, 2009). In addition, the FBI recently released the transcripts of Saddam's interrogation (2009).

This chapter will focus on the leadership traits of Saddam Hussein and the impact of these traits on his use of diversionary strategies. Scapegoating and diverting the attention of the domestic public through foreign policy were important pillars of Saddam Hussein's strategies of survival during his rule of Iraq. From the first days of the Ba'ath rule, Saddam Hussein constantly blamed an external other for domestic economic and social problems. Through these strategies, he tried to distract the attention of Iraqi people from recurring domestic problems and unify the people of Iraq, who were divided by ethnic, religious, tribal, and sectarian lines, around his leadership. One of the most discernible uses of this strategy took place before and during the First Gulf Crisis. Before the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein began to accuse Kuwait and other Gulf states of being the puppets of imperialist forces. After the invasion, he pursued "linkage politics" to deflect the attention of Arab public opinion. Finally, after the launching of Operation Desert Storm, Saddam attacked Israel with its SCUD missiles, to gain more popular backing in the Arab world.

Although many scholars and biographers have pointed out Saddam's constant use of scapegoating strategies for political survival, this leadership strategy of Saddam has never been studied systematically.<sup>41</sup> This chapter aims to analyze the relationship between his leadership traits and his selection of diversionary mechanisms. The chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part provides some background information on the domestic context of Iraq. The second part focuses on the authoritative decision unit in Iraq during the Gulf Crisis and an assessment of Saddam Hussein's leadership styles. The final part is a discussion of the use of diversionary foreign policy

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41 See. Piscatori, James. "Religion and Realpolitik: Islamic Responses to the Gulf War."; and Karsh, Efraim, and Inari Rautsi. *Saddam Hussein A Political Biography*.



before and during this crisis and the relation between his leadership styles and his use of diversionary mechanisms.

### **THE DECISION CONTEXT**

In 1990, the Iraqi economy was undergoing a huge crisis, and the society was heading toward turmoil. The Iran – Iraq War, which lasted for eight years, had socially and economically devastated both countries. Saddam Hussein’s attempt to repair the economy had failed, which led to the rise of social resentment against the regime in Baghdad. Finally, the end of the Cold War and the fall of communist totalitarian and authoritarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe countries, which had been the natural allies of the Iraqi regime for decades, had brought anxiety to “the strong man of Baghdad.”

The Iran-Iraq War was the bloodiest and longest war of the twentieth century.<sup>42</sup> Almost one million people died and the war did not bring any substantial gain for either party. It was also one of the costliest conflicts of the twentieth century in terms of the impact that it had on the economies of the parties (Alnasrawi, 1986: 869). Cities in both Iraq and Iran were destroyed and social services in both countries were disrupted. In Iraq, Basra and in particular the oilfields around the city were destroyed. In addition, the industrial plants and infrastructures of Khur al-Zubair and Fao were seriously damaged (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 1990: 21). According to Alnasrawi, after the war, Iraq experienced one of the worst economic crises of its history. Alnasrawi stated, “Its oil exporting capacity from the southern fields was destroyed, its infrastructure was seriously damaged, a major

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<sup>42</sup> The relationship between Iran and Iraq had never been stable. Saddam Hussein had always considered Iran to be Iraq’s most dangerous neighbor. In 1979, the revolution took place in Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini became its leader. Saddam Hussein was already worried by the rise of Shi’a ideology and he tried to prevent the spread of revolutionary ideologies among Iraqi Shi’a groups. He believed that with a sudden attack he could win a quick victory which would garner him immense political capital within Iraq and the Arab world.

segment of the its labor force had been drafted into military service and a large number of foreign workers had to be imported, its development plans were disorganized and lacking in investment funds, its foreign debt was high and its service was a major drain on a declining level of oil income, progress along the path of industrialization and diversification was blunted, its reliance on food imports increased, and inflation was rampant” (Alnasrawi, 1992: 336). During the war and in its aftermath, Saddam Hussein unsuccessfully tried to repair this devastated economy by implementing economic reforms, including liberalization of the economic sector and privatization.<sup>43</sup>

One of the most acute problems in the Iraqi economy in the early 1990s was the foreign debt. Before the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq was debt-free with the accumulation of 35 billion dollars in foreign reserves. However, most of these reserves were exhausted in the first years of the war (Sanford, 2003: 14). With the prolongation of the war, Iraq began to borrow huge sums of money from Western and Arab countries, most of which were spent on purchasing arms and military equipment. 44 After the eight-year war with Iran, Iraq had the third largest debt of any country in the world (Musallam, 1996: 85). Iraq’s estimated foreign debt in 1990 was 80 billion dollars and Western estimates put the cost of reconstruction at 230 billion dollars (Freedman and Karsh, 1993: 39). According to estimates, even if all oil revenues had been directed to the reconstruction effort, it would have taken almost twenty years to repair the damage. Meanwhile, the interest on the debts was also mounting and foreign companies and governments were reluctant to extend any more

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43 For the economic consequences of the Iran- Iraq War, see Alnasrawi 1986, Alnasrawi 1992, Gause, 2002, Lawson, 1992, Chaudhry, 1991.

44 Iraq’s estimated arm purchases during the war were between 52 and 102 billion dollars (Sanford, 2003: 14). The estimated overall cost of the war for Iraq was 452 billion dollars (Alnasrawi, 1992; Mofid 1990: 53). According to Mofid, this number does not include “inflationary costs, the loss of services and earnings by the many hundred thousands of people killed, the depletion of natural resources, the postponement of crucial development projects or the cost of the delayed training and education of the young people. Finally, the figure does not include the cost of the welfare payments to the hundreds of thousands injured in the war, who are not able to contribute fully to the creation of wealth for the national economy” (1990: 53).

credit to Iraq (Karsh and Rautsi, 2002: 202). In addition, the reflection of the deteriorating economic conditions in the GDP was staggering. The GDP per capita, which had been 4.083 dollars in 1980, plummeted to 1.537 dollars in 1988 (Alnasrawi 2002: 233 Cited in Sanford, 2003: 11) and inflation reached a record high of 400% in 1989 (Sanford, 2003: 17).

As stated above, in order to solve these problems, Hussein adopted some market reforms, which included policies “designed to encourage the growth of private enterprise and market based relations of production in the country’s economic affairs” (Lawson, 1992: 157). After the first wave of privatization in 1985-86, the regime embarked on another series of economic reforms in 1987, which included selling state lands, farms and factories to the private sector, and encouraging private enterprise and deregulating of the labor market (Alnasrawi, 1992: 338). However, despite the new measures in 1990, the overall state of the economy was more worrisome to Saddam Hussein than it had been in 1988. Contrary to the expectations of Saddam Hussein’s regime, the increasing privatization and market reforms brought “high levels of inflation, unemployment, and shortages in basic goods, growing and highly visible economic inequality, and the emergence of a brisk black market in foreign currencies” (Chaudhry, 1991: 17). In fact, the social consequences of these reforms, such as increasing unemployment and declining living standards, which were not well-calculated in advance, began to cause important social troubles for the regime.

Among the economic problems in Iraq in 1990, the most distressing was the increasing unemployment. The privatization of the state-owned enterprises brought a huge wave of unemployment in Iraq. In the absence of any employment regulation in privatization, the first act of the entrepreneurs who bought state-owned businesses was to restructure employment. According to estimates, the owners of industries and agricultural businesses dismissed between 40 and 80 percent of their work forces (ibid). In addition, the labor unions were dissolved during the privatization

program and the minimum wage was abolished (Chaudhry, 1994: 9). Most of the newly unemployed found themselves in an already competitive job market and without any social guarantees.

Another major source of unemployment was the demobilization of Iraqi soldiers. Under the Ba'ath government, the size of Iraq's army had increased by an incredible scale. It increased from six divisions in the mid 1960s to forty-four divisions during the eight-year war with Iran (al-Khafaji, 2000: 267). By 1988, the size of the armed forces in Iraq had reached 1 million, which constituted 22% of the labor force in the country (Alnasrawi, 1992: 337). In order to compensate for the civilian workforce's loss of Iraqis to the military, Iraq admitted large numbers of workers from other countries, particularly Egypt. In addition, "under the laws of the Arab Cooperative Council, founded in 1988, Yemen, Egypt, and Jordan were permitted to export labor freely to Iraq" (Chaudhry, 1994: 9). After the end of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein's regime began to demobilize its soldiers because of the high cost of feeding one million soldiers and the possible danger of an armed insurrection by these "free soldiers." Demobilized soldiers began to return to their hometowns in the first months of 1989. As a first step to deal with the demobilization-related unemployment, the Iraqi government squeezed 2 million migrant workers and slashed the remittances they were allowed to send home (Freedman and Karsh, 1993: 39). However, this was not enough to secure jobs for the demobilized soldiers. The discharged men of Iraq desperate for jobs began to participate in street fights against Egyptian workers, which spread to various big cities in Iraq (Aburish, 2001: 261). The government's attempt to suppress these fights resulted in increasing reaction to the security forces and attacks on public buildings.

The demobilization program halted after the release of 200,000 soldiers. The soldiers who remained in their barracks were a major source of concern for Saddam Hussein. As Musallam (1996) stated, the Iraqi army had become "a monster of the decision maker's own creation. The need to feed it,

and to keep it occupied, was a constant source of anxiety” (85). In fact, according to scholars like Hassan, this issue alone was enough of a reason for Saddam Hussein to search for a diversionary strategy. According to him:

On the eve of the invasion, Iraq had one million men under arms, a huge military structure for a country with the size and the strategic needs of Iraq. This state of affairs, in its turn, pressured the regime from within and, ultimately, compelled it to divert attention away from home (Hassan, 1999: 77).

Al-Khafaji also supported this claim in his study on the war-prone nature of the Ba’athist regime. For him:

The mood of despondence and disillusion among the youth had far-reaching repercussions for the regime. Throughout the war, and especially during its last three years, Iraqis were exposed to high levels of paranoid indoctrination, told that because of their superior qualities and traits they had been subject to all sorts of external conspiracies intended to hinder their progress and their opportunity to assume their natural role in leading the Arab-nation. Now that the war was over, there was no foreign enemy to blame for local difficulties. What sense of national pride and unity the war had fostered among Iraqi youth could disrupt into unpredictable violence once the demobilized fighters, who had been through all the atrocities of the war, discovered that the rewards of the war went into pockets of others, especially the nouveaux riches who had benefited from the privatization campaign and war contract (2000: 275).

In addition to increasing unemployment, the privatization also brought higher inflation and the black market to Baghdad. The Iraqi population, which was accustomed to “stability in consumer

goods.... to relatively equitable income distribution” (Chaudhry, 2001: 17), began to experience food shortages in big cities like Baghdad in 1989. In fact, “[f]or the first time under Saddam’s rule, feeding the people became a serious problem” for the government (Abd al-Jabbar, 1992: 4). Furthermore, the privatization created a new wealthy class, which was endangering the stability of the regime: 1) by replacing the Ba’ath bureaucracy, which had been the privileged class since the Ba’ath revolution of 1968, as the new powerful group in the society (Lawson, 1992) and 2) by becoming a source of aggravation for the losers of the privatization program.

Apart from these economic and social problems, the regime was also worried about possible ethnic or religious upheaval in the country after the end of Iran-Iraq war. Iraq was a torn country along different ethnic, religious, political and tribal lines. Its Kurdish minority in the north and its Shi’a majority in the south were especially major sources of concern for the regime in Baghdad. During Saddam Hussein’s vice-presidency and presidency, he tried to suppress these groups’ anti-regime demonstrations and rebellions by using excessive force.<sup>45</sup> He also initiated an Iraqi patriotism policy and tried to spread patriotic ideas among the non-Arab Kurds and non-Sunni Arabs. This policy was mostly successful among the Shi’a groups who joined the Iraqi army against their co-religionists. Suppressing the Shi’a groups was particularly important to Saddam because 60% of the Iraqi population was Shi’a and more importantly because with increasing internal migration, members of the Shi’a groups began to constitute the majority of the populations in big cities, such as

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45 During his vice-presidency, Saddam Hussein was assigned to the mission of removing divisive elements and solving separatist problems. There was increasing political activity among the Shi’a groups in the south, especially around Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr, who was the founder of the Islamic Dawa Party of Iraq. Al-Sadr tried to form a strong Islamist movement within Iraq together with Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim. In later years, Sadr was executed and Hakim fled to Iran to continue his political activities. For more information on al-Sadr and the Dawa Party, see Aziz, T. M. "The Role of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr in Shii Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980"; Shanahan, Rodger. "The Islamic Da'wa Party: Past Development and Future Prospects."; Batatu, Hanna. "Iraq's Underground Shi'a Movements: Characteristics, Causes and Prospects"; Mallat, Chibli. "Religious Militancy in Contemporary Iraq: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr and the Sunni-Shia Paradigm..

Baghdad (Baram, 2003). The Kurdish minority in the north was also a major source of concern for the regime.<sup>46</sup> Although the Kurds constituted a minority, they were organized and militarily well-equipped compared to Shi'a groups (Musallam, 1996: 53). Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath Party implemented different strategies of oppression, including mass deportation of Iraqi Kurds from the northern Iraq, burning of villages, and political persecution of any political group or individual who supported Kurdish autonomy. The persecution continued during the Iraq – Iran War, particularly because of the support of some Kurdish groups on the Iraq-Iran border, including the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Jalal Talabani to Iranian war efforts (al-Khafaji, 1988: 35; Olson, 1992: 477). After the ceasefire agreement with Iran, Saddam Hussein initiated a punishment campaign in 1988, which was also known as the Anfal Campaign. The campaign included the use of chemical weapons to systematically exterminate Kurdish villages and was implemented under the direction of Ali Hasan al-Majid. However, despite these drastic measures, the regime in Baghdad was still worried about these groups and the possibility of their resurgence.

In addition to being concerned about these domestic problems, Saddam Hussein was concerned about developments in international politics. He was especially worried about the collapse of communist and totalitarian regimes and the emergence of the popular resurgence in Central and Eastern European countries. The fall of these regimes was not only depriving Iraq of its traditional allies, but also endangering Saddam Hussein's authoritarian regime. The fall of the Ceausescu regime and the execution of Ceausescu were particularly traumatic incidents for Saddam Hussein. He knew the consequences of the fall of regimes in authoritarian countries and he had witnessed the fate of

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46 The Kurds around Mustafa Barzani, the legendary Kurdish leader, maintained their struggle for autonomy during the Ba'ath government. The external support for these Kurdish groups, particularly from Iran and the Soviet Union, made it extremely difficult for Baghdad to cope with this problem. For more information on the Iraqi Kurdish problem, see Bārzanī, Mas'ūd. *Mustafa Barzani and the Kurdish liberation movement (1931-1961)*; Yildiz, Kerim. *The Kurds in Iraq - Second Edition The Past, Present and Future*.

the fallen rulers of Iraq. According to reports, he watched Ceausescu's execution many times and ordered the heads of security services to study the videotapes of his overthrow (Freedman and Karsh, 1993; 31). His obsession with these incidents became more obvious during his interviews with foreign journalists. In numerous instances, he referred to the fall of Ceausescu and indicated that he will not be overthrown like him.<sup>47</sup>

In sum, by 1990, Saddam Hussein was in the midst of one of the worst crises of his rule in Iraq. According to Chaudhry, the situation in 1990 was so grave that “not even the experienced repressive apparatus of the Ba’ath Party could guarantee domestic political stability” (1991: 14). The economic crisis had started to endanger political stability. The Iraqi people had been unified and mobilized for eight years by their government and after the end of the war, they were expecting the fruits of the victory. However, it was a Pyrrhic victory and the government had no economic rewards to distribute to the Iraqi masses. There was no sign of reconstruction efforts on the infrastructure of the country and no indication of normalization in the life of Iraqis. Furthermore, new dividing lines emerged after the failure of the privatization program. Unemployment was providing a fertile ground for violence and conflict in the cities. The shortages were causing frustration within the society. More importantly, there were three assassination attempts on Saddam Hussein between the end of the war and the Gulf Crisis. The first one of these attempts took place in November 1988. It was a plot to kill Hussein by attacking his plane when he was returning from a state visit to Egypt. The second one was more worrisome for Hussein, since the planners of the assassination included some of his own officers from the Republican Guard. The third assassination attempt took place in January 1990 when he was riding his car around Baghdad. In addition to these assassination

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<sup>47</sup> See Diane Sawyer interview, ABC News 1991.



attempts, there was a coup attempt by army officers that failed in September 1989 (Freedman and Karsh, 1993: 29-30).

### **SADDAM HUSSEIN: THE PRESIDENT/ THE PREDOMINANT LEADER**

During his years as vice-president, Saddam Hussein made important achievements for the stability of Iraq, survival of the regime, and the development of the Iraqi economy. He consolidated the power of the Ba'ath party and spread its ideology within the society. The ethnic and religious resurgences were suppressed and opposition groups and organizations were neutralized. Through intelligence and security agencies and a network of spies and informants, he was able to create an Orwellian society. In eleven years, Saddam Hussein prepared the country for a smooth transition of power and after eleven years of being “the strong man of Baghdad,” he became “the only man of Baghdad.” When he was sworn in as the president, he was the sole decision maker of Iraqi politics.

From his first day in office as the president, Saddam Hussein endeavored to solidify his rule and consolidate his power. “The Great Purge” which started five days after Saddam Hussein took power, was just the beginning of Hussein’s repression of dissent (and of even possible dissent).<sup>48</sup> According to Karsh and Rautsi (2002), this purge marked the beginning of a new era of Iraqi politics. Iraq was transformed from a political-military dictatorship into a totalitarian state. “The Great Purge” was a starting point for the “Saddamization” of the Ba’ath Party and later of the whole Iraqi society. (117) In addition to eliminating people with multiple loyalties, Hussein eradicated the infrastructure for possible opposition in the future. Trade unions, political organizations, and media came under the total control of Saddam Hussein and his state apparatus. Multiple intelligence

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<sup>48</sup> “The Great Purge” was intended to uncover a “plot” allegedly aimed to overthrow Saddam. According to “confessions,” the plot was allegedly crafted by five of the twenty-one members of the Revolutionary Command Council. Karsh and Rautsi indicated that most of the people who were purged in this campaign were outspoken critics of Saddam Hussein and possible challengers of Hussein’s rule.

agencies were scrutinizing these organizations and preventing the emergence of any “harmful” elements for the Ba’ath Party. Hussein himself dubbed this new era as the “Stalinist era of Iraq” and stated, “We shall strike with an iron fist against the slightest deviation or backsliding beginning with the Ba’athist themselves” (Karsh and Rautsi, 2002: 117).

Saddam Hussein, during his presidency, followed multiple strategies to keep the Iraqi society and government under his control. Firstly, the Stalinist police state that Hussein created monitored and watched the people of Iraq in order to prevent the rise of oppositional movements. The usual suspects of the Iraqi state, such as ethnic and religious groups and leftist organizations, were particularly targeted by the coercive state apparatus. Shi’a leaders and clergy were persecuted and Shi’a groups with any form of Iranian connection were prohibited. Membership in these groups was made punishable by death. In addition, the political elites of the Kurdish groups were either assassinated or exiled. The relationship of the Kurdish groups with other countries, including the Soviet Union and Iran, were strictly monitored.

The cruelty of the regime was not only directed towards ethnic and religious groups. Sunni Arabs also suffered under Saddam Hussein’s rule. Their political activities and daily lives were also kept under surveillance. The domestic intelligence agencies of Iraq tried to recruit as many Iraqis as possible to be informants. Even students were asked to report their parents’ “political misbehavior” to their teachers. As stated by Hassan,

With the emergence of a highly militarized regime ruled by a presidential monarch and party seeking total domination of all walks of life in the state, the Iraqi government turned the whole of the people into state employees. Societal institutions and the middle classes were overwhelmed by a draconian process of

Leninist-type political mobilization of the rural population into the Ba'athist state organizations (1999: 86).

However, a Stalinist police state apparatus was not enough to keep 14 million people under control. In addition to using coercive mechanisms, Saddam Hussein and his government cultivated a new “Saddam Hussein” image in order to brand him as the leader and bolster his legitimacy. The first step was the construction of an image of Saddam Hussein’s paternalism above and beyond politics. Such an image would bolster his legitimacy because in a traditional society like Iraq, paternalism was considered as one of the most important sources of authority. In fact, according to this new image, Iraq was a family and Saddam’s Hussein’s role was depicted as being the father of the society and head of the family. The second step of this strategy was the presentation of Saddam Hussein as the hero of the Arabs. He promoted himself to field marshal and began to be pictured more frequently as a military leader. In addition, although he was a staunch secularist, considering the significance of religion in Iraqi society, he was portrayed as a religious Muslim and although he was Sunni, he claimed that his mother was Shi’a (Sciolino, 1991: 64). He also invented an elaborate family tree that traced his origin to Prophet Mohammed’s daughter Fatima and son-in-law Ali and their son Hussein -- the spiritual patrons of Shi’a sect (ibid).

Saddam Hussein tried to promote these images of himself by providing historical analogies to his rule and his policies. For instance, he imitated the most widespread depiction of Saladin – Saladin on a white horse – by posing on a white horse himself. In another instance, Hussein tried to associate himself with Sa’d ibn abi-Waqqass, the commander of the Muslim army that defeated the Persians in the Battle of Qadisiyyah (Abdi, 2008: 24). He exploited textbooks, museums, as well as stamps to foster this image of him as a Muslim warrior. However, despite Hussein’s Islamic references, for some of his biographers, his heart really belonged to the Mesopotamian kings. He constantly

reiterated his fascination with Nebuchednezzar and attempted to put himself in the same league with the Babylonian King. Saddam's "image juxtaposed with that of Nebuchednezzar became a popular theme, appearing in many contexts, including the commemorative emblem of the Babylonian Festival, depicting the bust of the two with a pseudo-cuneiform inscription" (Abdi, 2008: 26).<sup>49</sup>

In addition to his absolute control of Iraqi society, Saddam Hussein also dominated the foreign policy-making apparatus in Baghdad. He had full control of the executive branch and was in charge of military and security affairs. He was the predominant leader of foreign policy decision making in Iraq (Hermann, Hermann and Hagan, 1987; Hermann and Hermann, 1989; Hermann and Hagan, 1998; and Hermann, Preston, Korany, and Shaw, 2001). He had the final say in each and every foreign and security matter and exerted and commanded a unique kind of political power "that had evolved an institution into itself" (Hassan, 1999: 100). The Revolutionary Command Council, the Cabinet, the Army, and the Ba'ath Party constituted his political apparatus. Iraq's constitution also vested him with the authority to commit or withhold the resources with regard to the making of foreign policy. He was located at the top of the state hierarchy. He was "the President of the Republic, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, General Secretary of the Regional Command of the ABSP, Chairman of the Supreme Planning Council, Chairman of the Committee on

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<sup>49</sup> In fact, Nebuchednezzar represented everything that Saddam Hussein "aspired to: glory, conquests, regional hegemony from Gulf to Egypt and above all the embodiment of distinct Iraqi patriotism and Arab nationalism" (Karsh and Rautsi, 152). Saddam Hussein, in his semi-official biography, reiterated his fascination with the following words:

By God, I do indeed dream and wish for [assuming Nebuchednezzar's role]. It is an honor for any human being to dream of such a role... And what is most important for me about Nebuchednezzar is the link between the Arabs' ability and the liberation of Palestine. Nebuchednezzar was after all an Arab from Iraq, albeit ancient Iraq. Nebuchednezzar was the one who brought the bound Jewish slaves from Palestine. That is why whenever I remember Nebuchednezzar I like to remind the Arabs, Iraqis in particular of their historical responsibilities (Matar, 1981; 235-266).

Agreements, ...among other things” (Al-Khalil, 1998: 110). He also had control over the various forms of coercion mechanisms, including the Intelligence Agency, and the police forces.

Observers of Iraqi politics, for years during Saddam’s long rule, had believed that the Iraqi military would be the only institution that could challenge or end Saddam’s rule in Iraq either by means of a successful assassination attempt or by a coup d’etat (Hashim, 2003: 9). However, Saddam managed to control the military and prevented a coup for thirty years by implementing all possible coup-proofing strategies (Quinlivan, 1999). First of all, he created multiple security agencies and armed groups in order to defeat a possible coup attempt of one agency with the help of another.<sup>50</sup> These armed groups and parallel armies consisted of extreme loyalists to his regime, and their main functions were to be the last line of defense against a coup attempt.<sup>51</sup> The most prominent of these armies was the Revolutionary Guard. In addition, Saddam also created parallel intelligence agencies to protect his regime. Three separate secret police organizations- the *Amn* (internal security), the *Estikbharat* (military intelligence), and the *Mukhabarat* (Ba’athist Party intelligence) kept track of the activities of each other as well as possible opposition groups within Iraqi society (Murray and Scales, 2003; 27). He also appointed his first degree relatives and most trusted loyalists from his tribe to lead these agencies and armies. Especially Tikritis were leading all the key security agencies. Adnan Khairallah, Saddam’s brother-in-law and his uncle Khairallah’s son, was the Chief of Staff and Minister of Defense for a long time and Saddam’s half brother Barzan was the head of the *Mukhabarat*, intelligence agency. The National Security Office was run by his cousin Sa’adoun

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50 See Quinlivan (1999), Ahmet Hashim (2003), Andrew Parasilti and Sinan Anton (2000), Andrew Parasilti (2001).

51 One of the first internal security agencies created by Saddam Hussein was the Ba’ath Popular Army, which he founded to be a counterweight to the regular armed forces. As the Iraqi army grew in size and influence during the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein transformed the Popular Army into the Republican Guard, which had a similar mission and had members who were better trained and better equipped than the members of the Popular Army. Most of the members of the Guard were selected among the Sunni Arab tribes, particularly among the Tikritis (Hashim, 2003; 23-24).

Shaker. His uncle Khairallah was the mayor of Baghdad. His other half-brother Watban became the governor of the province of Tikrit. The Popular Army was under the command of the ultimate Saddam loyalist, Izzat Douri (Aburish, 2001: 161). In addition, Saddam Hussein's son-in-law Hussain Kamil Majid became the Minister of Industry and Military Industrialization and his brother Saddam Kamil married another one of his daughters and became a colonel (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 1987: 21-22).

Furthermore, the members of the officer corps were provided with a high standard of living, in comparison to other government employees. During the Iraq-Iran war, Hussein provided even more financial incentives to the army in order to prevent a possible rebellion. In this period, "[t]he already high standard of living of the officer corps was further improved and members of the armed forces were given priority for car and house purchases. Bereaved families, for their part, were granted a free car, a free plot of land, and an interest free loan to build a house" (Karsh and Rautsi, 1991: 154). Hussein also tried to satisfy the military's demands for modern equipment and arms. In short, Hussein devoted a considerable amount of resources to the armed forces (Hashim, 2003: 25). According to Baram, "[t]he families of his internal security units (the Republican and Special Republican Guards; the Special Security and the Palaces Guard, who are in charge of his immediate safety; and various other units) are provided with more economic benefits than any other group in Iraq" (Baram, 1998).

According to Hermann, when there is a predominant leader in the political system and his position is known, "those with different points of view generally stop public expression of their own alternative positions out of respect for the leader or fear of reprisals. If these others are allowed to continue discussing additional options, their opinions are no longer relevant to the political outcome of the moment" (2001: 84). During Saddam Hussein's presidency, nobody in his administration was

able to express an alternative viewpoint when he was present. The political system that Hussein created did not allow anyone in government or in Iraqi society in general to criticize his viewpoints and ideas. In fact, when his advisors and ministers determined that his mind was made up on an issue, they chose not to antagonize him by expressing their views or criticizing him (Baram, 1998).

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Hermann, et al., argue that “[e]ven though a political regime has a single, powerful individual who would qualify under the above definition as a predominant leader, that person must exercise authority in dealing with the problem under consideration to become the authoritative decision unit” (2001a; 85). In fact, the leader needs to have a general interest, as well as involvement, in the foreign and security policy of the country (Hermann, 1984, 1988a, 1995). Saddam Hussein had a deep interest in the foreign and security matters of Iraq. He not only formulated the defense and foreign policy matters in Iraq, but was also actively involved in implementing these decisions. Even during his vice-presidency, he was the person behind significant foreign policy issues, such as the rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the Algiers Agreement with Iran. After he became the president, he continued to formulate the foreign policy of Iraq himself. He unilaterally made the decision to attack Iran and he was the one to make the decision about the ceasefire agreement.

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52 Books such as *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* written by Kanan Nakiya presented various anecdotes of Saddam Hussein’s intolerance of those who challenged his ideas or put forward alternative viewpoints. Nobody was immune from his viciousness, including ministers and close advisors. The fate of Riyadh Ibrahim Hussein, who was the Minister of Health in Saddam’s cabinet, is a vivid illustration of this intolerance. During the first years of the Iran-Iraq war, Ayatollah Khomeini stated that he would never negotiate with Saddam Hussein on a ceasefire agreement. After Khomeini’s statements, Saddam suggested in a cabinet meeting that he resign temporarily in order to start ceasefire negotiations with Iran. He requested the candid opinions of his ministers on his suggestion. Initially, none of them accepted this suggestion. However, after his insistence, Ibrahim, reportedly suggested that Hussein step down temporarily in favor of Bakr and that after the negotiations, he become president again. Hussein asked Ibrahim to meet with Hussein privately in his office where he shot Ibrahim. After the shooting, he asked the ministers their opinions again and there was a unanimous rejection of Hussein’s resignation (Karsh and Rautsi, 2002; 166).

Later, he himself made the decision to invade Kuwait. After the invasion, he managed all aspects of the negotiations with the Western countries and the United Nations.

### **SADDAM HUSSEIN'S LEADERSHIP STYLE**

The analysis of Saddam Hussein's leadership style is based on content analysis of his interview responses.<sup>53</sup> These interviews were conducted during the Gulf War (in 1990 and 1991) and thus, they are context- specific. Authoritarian leaders like Saddam Hussein do not usually give interviews to the journalists of their country. Instead, they prefer to make speeches and address their nations through national and government-controlled channels. Although Saddam Hussein gave numerous interviews to foreign correspondents during the Gulf Crisis, he only granted a few interviews to Iraqi journalists. In the absence of freedom of the press and in the presence of strict control and censorship by the government, it was almost impossible for Iraqi journalists to ask impromptu questions of their leaders. However, according to Hermann, the few interviews that he gave to Iraqi journalists are still useful in assessing Hussein's leadership traits than any other prepared materials. The second set of interviews used in this analysis is the interviews of Hussein by foreign correspondents, which were translated into Arabic and broadcasted or published in the Iraqi press.

As stated in Chapter Two, Hussein's words are examined in this analysis for seven traits that have implications on how leaders conduct their foreign policies, including the kind of actions they are likely to urge on their governments and the way they structure and interact with their advisory

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<sup>53</sup> David Winter asserted the reluctance of Saddam Hussein to conduct interviews. According to him, Hussein was "somewhat of a 'fugitive' subject for interviewers. The readily available material from books, magazines, and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report consisted of only eleven English language texts of interviews....ranging over the period April 1974- January 1991" (Winter, 2005: 371). Hussein was even stricter about press conferences. Over the 15 years between 1974 and 1991, he only attended one press conference. He gave his first comprehensive interviews during the first years of the Iran-Iraq War. The second set of interviews was conducted during the First Gulf War. Saddam met with foreign journalists from different countries, but most importantly from the United States.



systems (Hermann, 2005a). The scores in these traits are compared with the regional norming group, namely Middle Eastern and Islamic political leaders. The scores on these traits and their comparisons with cultural subsets “provide information that is relevant to assessing how political leaders respond to the constraints in their environment, how they process information, and what motivates them to action” (ibid). The goal is to explore the relationship between these seven traits and the diversionary preferences of Saddam Hussein. The analysis also reveals which traits are particularly potent predictors of these preferences.

Saddam Hussein	Domestic Interview	Norming Group Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Compared to norming group
Belief in Controlling Events	0.38	0.32	0.04	High
Need for Power	0.22	0.25	0.03	Low
Conceptual Complexity	0.59	0.58	0.03	Moderate
Self-Confidence	0.35	0.36	0.10	Moderate
Task Orientation	0.48	0.59	0.06	Low
Distrust of Others	0.25	0.18	0.06	High

In Group Bias	0.10	0.13	0.02	Low
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**Table 2: Saddam Hussein's Leadership Style**

### *Challenging Constraints*

According to the leadership trait analysis, Saddam Hussein's score on "need for power" is low compared to that of other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders; whereas his score on "belief in controlling events" is high. These scores demonstrate that Saddam Hussein was a constraint challenger during the Gulf War. His low score in need for power and high belief in controlling events also shows that his challenges to constraints are direct and open.

This leadership trait analysis of Saddam Hussein is not surprising when we look at his behavior pattern during the Gulf War. During this period, he challenged domestic and external constraints directly and openly. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces was a challenge to international norms of state sovereignty, as well as to the charters of the United Nations and the Arab League.

Immediately after the invasion, international organizations, including the UN, the European Community and the Arab League condemned Iraq's action and demanded an immediate withdrawal. However, Hussein challenged these resolutions by not abiding by them and insisting on his claims over the territories of Kuwait. In addition, the invasion of an Arab country by another Arab country was a moral challenge for a leader whose country and whose party had pursued pan-Arab policies for decades. The reaction of Arab people to such an invasion was important to Saddam Hussein's legitimacy in the Arab regional order. During his presidency, he had always tried to utilize this external source of legitimacy. Initially, after the exclusion of Egypt from the Arab League following the Camp David Accords in 1979, Hussein attempted to fill the vacuum of Egypt and become the

“New Nasser” of the Arab world. Hussein later represented his eight-year long war with Iran as a fight between Arabs and Iranians and described Iraq as a bulwark country that protects other Arab countries from the threat of expansion of the Iranian revolution. Furthermore, after eight years of war with Iran and the substantial diminishment of economic resources as a result, another foreign venture was not a popular idea among Iraqis. His own military, in particular, was a major source of concern for him. According to Abd al-Jabbar:

The socio-political time bomb was the army. At least, three perhaps four generations were recruited, driven to the battlefields, kept there almost a decade. They had suffered the horrors and agonies of a long and draining war., were deprived of the best years of youthful, active life, and became hungry for literally everything (1992; 35).

The sudden decision to invade Iraq was another challenge to the demands of the Iraqi people and the expectations of the military as well.

#### *Openness to Information*

According to the leadership trait analysis, Saddam Hussein’s score on “conceptual complexity” is moderate in comparison to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders. His score in “self confidence” is also moderate compared to his norming group. According to these scores, Saddam Hussein was open to information and contextual cues during the Gulf War on a case by case basis. Although this result contradicts earlier analyses and arguments of experts on Saddam Hussein, it demonstrates that leaders can behave differently depending on the context (Hermann, 2005; Karsh and Rautsi, 1991).

Almost all of the biographers and experts on Saddam Hussein have depicted him as a man who was mostly indifferent and apathetic to information from outside. According to scholars and biographers

such as Karsh and Rautsi (1991), Winter (1993), Hermann (2005), and Post (2005, 2003), Saddam Hussein made important policy decisions himself, without consultations with others. After several instances in which Hussein harshly treated those who tried to express alternative viewpoints, his ministers and so-called advisors opted not to interfere with the decision making process at all. Nobody in his inner circle was courageous enough to challenge his viewpoint or present an alternative solution to a problem. Most of his advisors were there just to approve or confirm his opinions and reassure him about the accuracy of his viewpoints. In a leadership trait analysis of Hussein, Hermann stated that Hussein was likely to take most actions on his own and for him, political advisors were only the implementers of actions previously decided by him, not participants in the decision making process (Hermann, 2005a; 378). In another leadership analysis, Winter reported that the sycophants around Saddam Hussein led him to make disastrous miscalculations in foreign policy because of their fear of correcting mistakes that they saw in his policies (Winter, 1993; 110).

Throughout his presidency, Hussein's resistance to listening to the advice of others caused him to detach from the realities of the world and in some instances, resulted in huge policy failures. According to Baram, one of these failures was his decision to attack Iran. For him,

[t]his decision was made without any consultation. When Saddam's advisors realized that his mind was made up, they dared not to antagonize him. Only a year earlier he had executed fifty-five senior party officials and army officers for voicing opposition to an important decision he had made (Baram, 1998).

According to Myerson, self-proclaimed Marshal Saddam Hussein's ignorance of the advice of his generals led to Iraq's defeat during important parts of the Iran-Iraq War (Myerson, 1992; 234). Moreover, his scant experience with the Western world (Post, 1993; 49) made him extremely

vulnerable to conspiracy theories and led him to make erroneous foreign policy decisions. (Stein, 1992; 178) In fact, for scholars like Hassan, the most difficult aspect of dealing with the Iraqi leadership was the absence of Saddam Hussein's political advisors. According to him:

There were no persons or key contacts to discreetly influence, and there were no channels through which to convey messages or suggestions for solving and finding a way out of the conflict. No public figures, no single individual in the Revolutionary Command Council- which is the highest official political institution in Iraq- no ministers, no Ba'ath Party member, not even the army had any real authority or power at all...(1999: 102)

The outcome of the leadership trait analysis in some way contradicts with these earlier findings and demonstrates that Hussein might also be open to information in some instances during the Gulf Crisis. It shows that some leadership traits may be context-specific and leaders may change their attitudes toward incoming information and contextual cues when they are in crisis situations. A closer analysis of Saddam Hussein's openness to information during this crisis suggests that Hussein became more open to information as the crisis became more international.

It is possible to track some changes in Saddam Hussein's behavior during the Gulf Crisis from the studies that focused on the decision making process in Baghdad. For example, Amatzia Baram (1998) stated that Hussein made decisions during the crisis in consultation with several people, including: Husayn Kamil, his young and docile cousin and son-in-law; General Iyad Khalifa al-Rawi, Commander of the Republican Guard; and Ali Hasan al-Majid, a professional soldier and his cousin. Moreover, after the invasion of Kuwait, some generals, including Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Army Nizar-al Khazraji were given the opportunity to express to Saddam Hussein their concerns about a possible clash between the Iraqi and American armies. Khazraji submitted a report to Hussein

explaining that in the case of a war with the United States, Iraq would be the loser. He later reported to journalists:

I explained the potential dangers for Iraq. I also explained the status of the balance of powers, saying that Iraq would lose the war. A meeting was held at the general command on 18 September to discuss my two reports in Saddam Hussein's presence.... The commander in chief expressed his anger and ended the meeting before I finished my report (Quoted in Ashton, 2008: 269).

Although Khazraji was dismissed from his post after this unwelcomed report, the fact that he was able to express his opinions to Saddam Hussein, without being physically harmed demonstrated some signs of change in Hussein's attitude toward information.

As the crisis became more international with the passage of UN resolutions and the formation of an international coalition, Saddam Hussein began to occupy a central position in world politics. This was the first time in his political career that he became a focal point in world politics. He didn't have sufficient knowledge and experience on how to approach Western public opinion, Western states, or international organizations. Although Hussein had begun to construct friendly relations with Western countries and gained their support during the Iran-Iraq war, he had never played in the league of Western diplomacy and had never lived in a Western country. Even the number of his trips to Western capitals, as vice-president and president, was insubstantial compared to his visits to Arab capitals (Musallam, 1996). In addition, he possessed little knowledge about the political systems in Western countries.

Because of Saddam Hussein's deficient knowledge of and experience with Western countries, he started during the Gulf Crisis to be more open to information. Although he continued to be selective about his sources, who included King Hussein of Jordan and Yasser Arafat, he

demonstrated a relative readiness to acquire contextual information. An anecdote of one of his meetings with Yasser Arafat demonstrates Saddam Hussein's willingness to understand the Western mindset about the Gulf Crisis and the intentions of the Western governments as well as his realization of the inability and reluctance of his advisors to inform him about the developments in Western countries. During the meeting with Arafat, he asked Arafat whether Western threats to attack him are real.

Arafat... wouldn't give a clear answer and referred Saddam to his special adviser Bassam Abu Sharif. The latter said that the West would indeed attack, and to support his position, he cited cover stories on Saddam in Time and Newsweek magazines. At this point Saddam turned to his own advisors and asked them why no one had told him that he had been the subject of these stories (Aburish, 2001: 299)

This anecdote shows that Saddam Hussein became more open to information as the crisis transformed into an international problem. Moreover, during the crisis and between his invasion of Kuwait and the launch of Operation Desert Storm, he was able to meet with numerous foreign dignitaries, diplomats, intellectuals, political leaders and journalists. He had never experienced this level of interaction with foreigners in his life and his openness to information was partly due to the conversations and exchanges that took place during these meetings.

#### *Motivation by Problem or Relationship*

The leadership trait analysis shows that Saddam Hussein's score on "the motivation for seeking office" was low compared to Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders. Hussein's score indicates that he focused more on relationships than on tasks. This score may sound odd at first, considering the fact that dictators and authoritarian leaders do not usually need to deal with the public or worry about forming relationships. Hussein's score provides an important insight into his leadership and

priorities. Hussein's main aims under difficult economic, political, and social circumstances became group maintenance, maintaining the loyalty of his constituents, and increasing the morale of the Iraqi army and society. Although his rule was authoritarian, he still needed the support and backing of his people and fostering collegiality and camaraderie was an important part of his leadership during the Gulf Crisis.

Saddam Hussein's interpersonal emphasis brings to light a neglected dimension of the relationship of authoritarian leaders to their publics, which was described at length above in Chapter Two. Although there were no democratic elections, independent media, or autonomous polling agencies in Iraq during the Gulf Crisis, Saddam Hussein was still extremely vigilant about the public's reaction to his policies and he made speeches to rally people in Iraq and the Arab world around his leadership. He also constantly tried to ensure the loyalty of his people to prevent a popular movement in the country. According to Byman, Pollack and Waxman (1998):

Although Iraqi people are kept under control and the regime rarely canvasses the public in formulating policy, popular opinion is not entirely irrelevant to Iraqi policymaking. If the Iraqi people were to muster the resources and courage to rise up, they could sweep the regime from power. Perhaps surprisingly, Saddam has repeatedly demonstrated that he can be responsive to public opinion under certain conditions... (129).

His biographers, Karsh and Rautsi, also emphasized that he learned from his days on the streets of Baghdad that repressing public opinion, demonstrations, and popular grievances does not always help an authoritarian leader to stay in power, especially in unstable countries like Iraq, which has a long history of popular uprising. They argued that:



[i]t had been evident to him, from early on, that even the least democratic form of government required substantial popular support... He knew that a regime ruling at the points of bayonets was condemned to a precarious existence, and bound to come to an abrupt end. (Karsh and Rautsi, 2002; 89).

At the start of the Gulf War, Hussein was already aware that when there is opposition in a country, repression may not always be the best option for an authoritarian leader. Saddam Hussein, as a leader with a relationship focus, preferred strategies that would strengthen the relationship of him with his people and those that would keep the morale and spirit of the group high against the external others.

#### *Motivation towards the World*

According to the leadership trait analysis, Saddam Hussein's score on "distrust of others" is high compared to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders. His score on "in-group bias," on the other hand, is low compared to his norming group. These scores reveal that Saddam Hussein believed that the world was a conflict-prone place with good and evil, but that he also believed that other countries have constraints on what they can do. Therefore, he was more flexible in his outlook than those who saw the world in strictly Hobbesian terms. He considered the possibility of opportunities, while at the same time remaining vigilant.

Again, this outcome is somewhat contradictory to the findings of scholars and observers of Iraqi politics. Previous research on Saddam Hussein argued that he perceived the world in Hobbesian terms. According to these studies, for Saddam Hussein, the world was full of threats directed against Iraq. There was good and evil in world politics and the evil forces included the state of Israel, Western powers and Persia. These evil forces were constantly trying to threaten the development and unity of Iraq. According to previous research, Hussein believed that these "evil forces" were

intent on spreading their ideologies and powers at the expense of Iraq and the Arab world. The research indicated that amid all these attacks, Hussein made it the mission of the Iraqi people to confront these evildoers (Post, 2005). In fact, there were “us” and “them” in Hussein’s political thinking and a constant struggle between Iraqi people and these external others (Hermann, 2005b).

The discrepancy between previous scholarship and the leadership trait analysis during the Gulf Crisis can also be partly attributed to Hussein’s openness to information and increasing interaction with foreigners during the Gulf Crisis. Another important reason of his low in-group bias during the Gulf War was his attempt to reach out to the Arab masses, Islamic world and Western public opinion, as well as his constant emphasis on the possibility of peaceful resolution of conflicts. In fact, although he continued to express his enmity against the “external others” throughout the crisis, he also constantly mentioned the possibility of resolution of the crisis without the use of force. For instance, while criticizing the policies of the US administration, he was also asking to meet with George H.W. Bush face-to-face and to solve problems in a collegial manner.

### **THE USE OF DIVERSIONARY MECHANISMS**

Amid the above-mentioned difficulties, constraints, and increasing opposition, Saddam Hussein had two options. The first option was to suppress the dissent and increase his grip on power through autocratic measures. He had applied this method numerous times throughout his political career and bloodily suppressed every possible opposition group that endangered the survival of his regime. However, he was experienced enough to understand the side effects of the constant use of this strategy and the possible consequences of public outburst. Saddam Hussein knew that he could not use the policy of oppression forever and that without a decent amount of public support and the loyalty of Iraq’s citizens, it was impossible for his regime to stay in power.

The second option was to deflect the attention of the public from these domestic problems through the use of a foreign policy event. It was a strategy of challenging these constraints temporarily without losing the public's support. Saddam Hussein believed that he could rescue himself from these domestic pressures by shifting the attention of his people to a foreign policy problem. This new foreign policy issue could distract the public and make them delay/forget their "less existential" demands and objections. He could even ask for further sacrifice and generosity from his people. Furthermore, using foreign policy could help him to rally the people around his flag and unify them under his leadership.

Throughout Saddam Hussein's long political career, in addition to his policy of suppressing the dissent he also constantly used diversionary strategies in order to deal with domestic opposition, economic and social problems, and possible contenders to his rule. Starting from his first days in power, he employed diversionary strategies to mobilize the Iraqi people around a common ideal and to prevent coup attempts against his regime. For Bengio:

The Ba'ath regime has known many external enemies, and the most intense hostility has usually been reserved for the "imperialist-Zionist-Iranian" triangle. All three components were considered excellent mass propaganda targets by the Ba'ath..... The trinity was meant to demonstrate the constant plotting and collusion against Iraq, to deflect frustration and anger away from home towards external enemies, and to underpin the Ba'athi policy of violent action (Bengio, 1998: 14).

During the 1970s, while trying to consolidate his regime, he used a foreign policy event- most often the Palestinian problem after his purge campaigns “as a trump card both in rallying the masses behind the regime and providing an outlet for popular frustration” (Karsh and Rautsi, 2002: 57). 54

Saddam once again employed this strategy with the Gulf War. He threatened Iraq’s southern neighbor Kuwait and accused Kuwait of waging an economic war against Iraq. Long interpreted Hussein’s policy toward Kuwait as an attempt to shift the focus of the Iraqi people’s attention away from the staggering economic and social problems. According to Long:

Some exterior crisis, Saddam realized, was needed to focus the potentially self-destructive energies of the disparate groups. For eight years, war with Iran served just that. But peace, alas, was finally brokered and something else was needed (2004: 9)...

These various internal needs thus generated another need for Iraq, that of discovering an external crisis to divert attention away from home. The external crisis could also justify the continued active military service of 5-6 percent of its population (almost ten percent when the Popular Army is included). Totalitarian regimes have generally used the threat of enemies to justify the most abusive of domestic policies as well as continued calls for national sacrifice. Of course there

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54 According to Telhami, using the Palestinian question for domestic purposes had been a common trait of the authoritarian leaders of the Arab world.

To be sure, Arab states abused this question for their own ends, with the Palestinians always paying the price. It is also true that the Palestinian issue is not high on the daily agenda of most Arabs. Still, for historical reasons, the Palestinian issue remains at the very core of every major Arab, Islamic, and anti-Western political movement, providing lens through which Arabs view the world.... Palestine remains the subconscious cue that the Arab public opinion employs in evaluating the behavior of the outside world towards the Middle East: a friend is he who supports the Palestinians and an enemy if he who opposes them. Whenever the legitimacy of an Arab government comes into question, it will rush to wrap itself in the Palestinian flag (1993: 186).

were the usual external suspects to be rounded up: the other wealthy Gulf States, Zionism, and imperialism. (Long, 2004: 13)

Karsh and Rautsi also proffered a similar viewpoint about Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait.

In the summer of 1988 Iran was debilitated; Iraq's military power was greater than ever, having steadily expanded during the war. In Tehran an agonizing reckoning was already under way; in Baghdad millions were dancing on the streets.

Yet not even such euphoric circumstances would lure a professional survivor like Hussein into a false sense of security. He had no illusions, whatsoever, realizing that the celebrations would give way to a hangover; that a bill for the dislocations of the war would be presented in one form or another. He knew that even in the most repressive police state there are limits to what people are willing to endure or the sacrifices they are prepared to make. The removal of the Iranian threat, the main factor cementing Iraqi society during the war years, generated an urgent need for new means of rallying public support and enthusiasm behind Saddam (2002: 194).

At the same time Saddam Hussein also linked the crisis with Kuwait to an external plot to overthrow his government and destroy Iraq. Saddam Hussein claimed that problems in the Iraqi economy, which were seemingly domestic problems, were related to some external forces. (Ruysdael, 2003: xviii). As Long stated:

As it happened, the Iraqis simply exchanged devils. Imperialists and Zionists, although not new enemies, took the place of those theretofore demonized, who in turn became the sought-after ally.....Particularly significant is that the frequency and

stridency of verbal attacks on Israel markedly increased after a period of relative quiescence...

In February, Saddam had promised, "The banners of justice shall fly over holy Jerusalem." Later in the next months, Saddam assured his listeners in a speech that Jerusalem could be liberated if Arabs were determined and exercised faith in God. Iraq he declared, which never tired of war, would lead in the effort. In April, of course, Saddam delivered his famous fire speech, threatening Israel. (2004: 85-86)

Although Kuwait was accused of waging an economic war against Iraq, in the discourse of Saddam Hussein, it was again the imperialist forces and particularly the state of Israel that was behind this conspiracy. According to Hussein, Kuwait was just a tool of these enemy forces to destroy Iraq. In fact, Hussein's diversion policy mostly relied on scapegoating external forces for Iraq's domestic problems and trying to rally people around his flag and against them.

An early indication of Saddam Hussein's intention to use this strategy was his speech at the opening of the fourth summit of the Arab Cooperation Council in Amman in February 1990. Hussein spent half of this lengthy speech underlining the increasing threat of Israel and Zionism in the region. He called for unity in the Arab world against this threat and suggested preparedness for an attack from Israel (Hussein 1990a). According to scholars like Barnett in this speech, "Saddam Hussein attempted to rally Arab states around him by stating that Arab power would promote (his version of) regional peace and by issuing thinly veiled threats against Israel" (Barnett, 1998: 215).

Throughout 1990, Hussein intensified his discourse against Israel. In another speech in April 1990, he threatened Israel by stating that "by God, we will make fire eat up half of Israel if it tried anything against Iraq" (Saddam, 1990). His words were widely publicized among the Arab people in the Middle East and provided high esteem and support for Saddam Hussein.

While threatening to destroy Israel, Hussein was at the same time trying to maintain friendly relations with Western countries. He tried to reassure the decision makers in Israel and in the United States about the domestic nature of these speeches (Freedman and Karsh, 1993: 32-33). Henderson, in his book on the Gulf War, highlighted the differences in the discourse of Saddam Hussein.

There was no hint of deviation from the standard hard line position, that Israel was a false usurper, an illegal entity, a cancerous tumor that should be excised from Palestine – but then Saddam was speaking to the Iraqi news agency, not in a conversation with visiting Americans. (1991: 99)

An important demonstration of this attitude took place in his meeting with Prince Bandar after his April speech against Israel. According to Woodward, Hussein explained the nature of the speech with following words:

...[Y]ou must understand the context in which it had been made.. it had been delivered to members of the armed forces at a public forum where emotions were running high , with people clapping and screaming. As we both know, it never hurts in the Arab world to threaten Israel, so I had done it. (Woodward, 1991: 210)

He also assured Prince Bandar that he would not attack Israel.

“I want to assure President Bush and His Majesty King Fahd that I will not attack Israel” Saddam stressed....

“Do you want us to mention this to Bush as our observation?” Bandar asked, “Or is it a message from you to President Bush?”

“It’s a message from me to President Bush” Saddam replied. (Woodward, 1991: 202).

In the same conversation, after a pause, he once again turned back to Bandar's question about his speech in April.

Saddam then turned to justifying his verbal assaults on Israel, though he continued giving assurances that he would not attack the Jewish state. Israel was the natural lightning rod for creating a crisis atmosphere, he said. It had been two years since the Iran-Iraq cease-fire, and the Iraqi people were getting relaxed. "I must whip them into a sort of frenzy or emotional mobilization so they will be ready for whatever may happen" (ibid.).

Despite assurances that he made to Arab and Western policy makers, Saddam Hussein continued to escalate his tone against Israel in his speeches. In his televised speeches, he blamed Zionism and Israel for the economic problems that Iraq was encountering. In a speech delivered on July 1990, the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Ba'ath Revolution, Saddam Hussein stated following:

In their recent campaign, the imperialist and Zionist forces have not used weapons to kill the sons of the nation, nor have they threatened to use their fleets and air bases in this region and elsewhere in the world, as is often done by the usurpers of the land and the violators of Arab dignity and sovereignty....Rather they started to weaken and kill the capability that protects Arab dignity and sovereignty by tools and methods suited to them. They followed a method, which produces results that are more dangerous than those produced by the old direct methods. This new method...seeks to cut off livelihood while the old method..sought to cut off necks. When livelihood is cut off, the roots dry up and the shoots and branches wilt and become timber due to the loss of basic source of life. Imperialism and Zionism hope



that they will succeed by this method after they have failed by traditional methods.  
(Saddam, 1990)

Meanwhile, the Gulf Crisis was also reaching its peak. The confrontation between Iraq and Kuwait was reaching its tipping point. Hussein was aware of the value of his pan-Arabist image and was not willing to lose it. However, to attack or threaten to attack a neighboring Arab country would be an anathema according to Arabist principles. It would also be against the convention of the Arab League. He therefore linked the Gulf states to Israel. In a speech, he stated that:

They (Imperialists and Zionists) hope to achieve their aim by this new method and through the Arabs themselves, both individuals even states, in this region. I mean by that the new oil policy which certain rulers of the Gulf states have been pursuing intentionally for some time to reduce oil prices without any economic justification and against the wish of the majority of OPEC producers, and also against the interest of the Arab nation...

...True patriotism and pan-Arabism will be judged according to the kind of oil policies we pursue and where we stand on Arab-Zionist conflict and the struggle for the liberation of Palestine. Only by this yardstick can we separate the sheep from the goats. Only by this standard can we tell the dissemblers from the upright and the honest. (Saddam 1990)

In fact, as stated by Hassan, in most of the speeches and government statements, the main target of the conflict, Kuwait, was invisible.

There were a very few scattered references to it in the Iraqi presidents' political speeches during the Gulf Crisis and in the main they described Kuwait as being active within the American and Zionism's grand scheme against Iraq. (1999: 161)

In these speeches, Hussein focused on Israel and the situation of Palestinians and were crafted to attract the constellations of civil society in other Arab states behind his leadership. (1999: 160)

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1990, Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait. The invasion became public with Baghdad Radio's following broadcast:

God has helped the free and honest men of Kuwait to depose the traitor regime in Kuwait, which is involved in Zionist and foreign plots. (Saddam quoted in Bengio, 2001)

According to Coughlin, although Hussein was not expecting any plaudits for his move, he was also not expecting such a huge-scale international reaction to his invasion of Kuwait. British Premier Margaret Thatcher, who was with George H.W. Bush, immediately drew an analogy between Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and Hitler's invasion of Sudetenland. After a few days, the US government and Soviet Union issued a joint declaration of condemnation of the invasion. Within hours of the invasion, the United Nations Security Council convened and passed Resolution 660, which condemned the invasion and demanded an immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops. After this resolution, the Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council passed their own resolutions.

The most troubling development for Saddam was the resolution of the Arab League and the dispatch of Arab troops as part of the multinational force. The Arab League summit revealed the increasing isolation of Hussein's regime in the Arab regional order. The only hope for Hussein was to mobilize the Arab masses against their governments' support for the anti-Iraq coalition. To

achieve this, Hussein one more time adopted diversionary strategy and targeted Israel to divert the attention from his invasion of Kuwait. In fact, as stated by Karsh and Rautsi:

With the summit revealing an unbridgeable gap with other Arab regimes, Saddam sought to undermine them by rallying masses behind his cause by Zionizing the crisis. By linking his Kuwaiti venture to the Palestinian problem, he hoped to portray himself as the champion of the Pan-Arab cause, thereby eradicating any conceivable opposition to his move in the Arab world. If the 'restoration of Kuwait to the motherland' was the first step towards 'the liberation of Jerusalem', how could any Arab leader be opposed to it? The aggressor would be transformed into a liberator and a hero. (2002: 100)

Saddam Hussein decided to shift the issue to the Palestinian cause not because he was willing to attack Israel and liberate Palestine. Under the economic and social circumstances, he knew that it would be unwise to start another costly war with Israel. It was only part of Saddam Hussein's scapegoating strategy. A few days after the summit, Saddam Hussein alleged that Israeli pilots had been deployed in Saudi Arabia, disguised as Americans. Although the coalition forces and Saudi officials denied this accusation, Saddam Hussein continued his allegations about the Israeli contribution to the war efforts (Karsh and Rautsi, 2002: 101).

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, Saddam initiated a new diversionary maneuver by proposing a plan for withdrawal from Kuwait. It was a three-point peace initiative, which mostly aimed to link the invasion of Kuwait to other conflicts in the region, and most importantly to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. His proposal started with a verbal attack on the United States, as well as Israel, and continued by proposing to "solve" all problems of invasion together.

So, as to contribute to creating an atmosphere of real peace in the region: and in order to facilitate the achievement of stability in the area; and to expose the lies of America and its ugly ally Israel....I propose that all issues of occupation in the region, and that which had been misrepresented as occupation, be solved in accordance with the same standard, principles, and premises laid down by the UN Security Council.....First, to make ready withdrawal arrangements according to the same principles for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, and for the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, and for the withdrawal of troops on the Iraq-Iran front, and to make arrangements for the status of Kuwait. (Saddam 1990)

While the proposal was promptly rejected by the White House, the reaction among Arabs was ambivalent. It was definitely welcomed by the Palestinians and Jordanians and it made sense to many others in the Arab world (Khalidi, 1991: 171). Demonstrations took place in support of Saddam Hussein and his peace proposal in Arab capitals. According to Joel Brinkley of *the New York Times*, “by positioning himself as the strongest advocate of the Palestinian cause, Saddam Hussein automatically becomes Israel’s *bête noire* and, as a result, a leader of great appeal to Arabs.” (Brinkley, cited in Hiro, 1992: 274). After making this proposal, he started and ended most of his speeches during this period by glorifying Palestine and cursing Israel. He also watched the developments in the occupied territories carefully and utilized them for his own purposes. For example, after the death of 20 Palestinians in Jerusalem in September 1990, Hussein made a televised speech and stated:

After the Zionists thought that the American occupation of the sanctities in Najd and Hijaz and the desecration of Mecca and the tomb of the Prophet, may God’s

peace and blessing be upon him provide them with a golden opportunity to entrench their occupation of Jerusalem..they attempted to destroy the al-Aksa mosque after they failed to burn it and to destroy it through excavations (Saddam, 1990 cited in Freedman and Karsh, 2002: 169).

He also declared three days of national mourning in Iraq in this speech (Hiro, 1992: 211).

Saddam Hussein's linkage policy to divert attention from his invasion of Kuwait and to unify Iraqi people domestically and Arabs regionally was partially successful in mobilizing the masses in the Middle East. However, it was not strong enough to create a wave of revolutions that would topple Arab regimes. Three months after the invasion, in November 1990, the UN Security Council passed another resolution, Resolution 678, which gave Iraq a withdrawal deadline (15 January, 1991) and authorized all necessary means to implement Resolution 660. After the withdrawal deadline of January 15<sup>th</sup> passed and Iraq had still not withdrawn, a coalition air attack was launched against Iraqi targets.

Saddam Hussein intensified his threats toward Israel after these resolutions. In his famous speech, "Mother of All Battles", he mentioned the following:

... Then the skies in the Arab homeland will appear in a new color and a sun of hope will shine over them and over our nation and on all the good men whose bright lights will not be overcome by the darkness in the hearts of infidels, the Zionists, and the treacherous..

Then the door will be wide open for the liberation of beloved Palestine, Lebanon, and the Golan. The Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock will be released from the bondage. (Saddam, 1991)

Immediately after this speech, Saddam Hussein began to attack Israel with SCUD missiles. He knew that striking Israel with SCUD missiles would not bring any strategic military advantage to Iraq; but it would definitely be welcomed enthusiastically by Arab masses as well as by the people in Iraq. Although the material damage done by the SCUD missiles was lower than Hussein expected, the psychological damage was immense. For the first time since the establishment of the Israeli state its main population centers were under a military attack by an Arab army, life was stopped in city centers, thousands fled to Jerusalem to be safe from bombing, casualties happened mostly because of the heart attack and problems about the masks (Freedman and Karsh, 1993: 169). On the other hand, the Arab world's reaction to the SCUD attacks was ecstatic. People in various Arab capitals celebrated the end of Israel's immunity from attacks by dancing in the streets and organizing mass demonstrations in support of Saddam Hussein. Even in Syria, despite the draconian rule of Assad, people expressed their happiness and joy on the streets (Hiro, 1992: 325).

Several scholars stated Hussein's diversionary motivations in its relations and threats against Israel during this period. For instance, Jerrold Post, a highly acclaimed expert on Saddam Hussein, evaluated Hussein's policies during the Gulf War as follows:

What began as an act of naked aggression toward Kuwait was transformed into the defining drama of his life. Although he had previously showed little concern for Palestinian people, the shrewdly manipulative Saddam had wrapped himself and his invasion of Kuwait in the Palestinian flag. (Post, 1993: 57)

Karsh and Rautsi also asserted the diversionary nature of Hussein's attacks on Israel.

...Saddam showed a staunch, principled face to Iraq's other neighbors, seeking to "Zionize" the Gulf crisis from the outset. By linking his Kuwaiti venture to the Palestinian problem, he hoped to portray himself as the champion of the pan-Arab

cause, thereby eradicating any conceivable opposition to his move in the Arab World. (Karsh and Rautsi, 2002: 227)

James Piscatori also interpreted Saddam Hussein's policy in the same way. According to him:

When Saddam Hussein launched his initiative of 12 August, explicitly linking his withdrawal from Kuwait with Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, he was exploiting the profound sentiment which had become the Arab- and the Muslim- consensus. It was on one level, an obvious political ploy, a cost free way of attempting to divert attention. He appeared to strike a blow for Palestinian liberation without doing a great deal to accomplish it. But by explicitly shifting focus to the Arab-Israeli conflict and restoring the question of Palestine to pride of place, he was on another level, tapping into deep springs of Muslim concern (Piscatori, 1991: 22).

Although there is a general consensus that Saddam Hussein's escalation of conflict with Israel and his SCUD attacks were intended to divert the attention of the Arab public and rally them around his leadership, there are also some alternative explanations for Saddam's actions. One of the most popular explanations is about Saddam's intentions to destroy Israel because of his willingness to become the new Salahuddin of the Arab world by saving the Occupied Territories from the hands of Israel (Parson, 1991). According to the proponents of this view to become the Salahuddin had been the dream of every political leader in the Arab world and it was this dream that pushed the Arab leaders, including Nasser of Egypt and al-Assad of Syria, to pursue a more belligerent foreign policy against Israel after the end of the World War II. Saddam's attacks against Israel were also genuinely intended to rescue the occupied territories from the hands of Israel. However, this explanation neglected an important part of Saddam's strategic and military calculations. Although Saddam, as each and every Arab leader, dreamt about being Salahuddin, he had no intention at that moment to engage in an armed conflict with the state of Israel. It was almost certain that an armed

conflict with Israel would be a long and challenging war and after eight year long war with Iran it would be disastrous for his rule to commit the resources of his country for such a venture. In addition, although Saddam strategically utilized from the Arab-Israeli conflict, he didn't have a significant interest in the Palestinian issue. During the 1973 War, the state of Iraq under the leadership of Bakir and Saddam peripherally involved in the armed conflict and just send a symbolic number of troops to Syria – Israeli border. This reluctance to engage in an armed conflict with Israel was a starting point for a serious rift between al-Assad's Syria and Saddam's Iraq. When the Iran and Iraq war started, al-Assad this time refused to support Iraq and aligned with Iran. According to Assad, Saddam, with this war, was serving not for the interest of the Arab world and Palestinian cause but only for its petty interest. For Assad, a war with Iran, whose government was following an anti-Israeli discourse, was not only damaging the anti- Israeli block in the Middle East but also diverting the Arab resources away from its more imminent threat, Israel. Moreover Saddam had never been in good terms with Palestinian Liberation Organization and its leaders. In the “Black September” of 1970 he stood firmly against an intervention to Jordan to help the Palestinian refugees. During the oil boom years, he excluded Palestinians from coming to work in Iraq (Karsh, 2002). During most of 1980s, against the PLO's leadership he had supported Abu Nidal, who allegedly assassinated important leaders of PLO, such as Abu Iyad (Mattar, 1993). Just “prior to the Gulf War, he worked to win Israeli acquiescence in the laying of an Iraqi oil pipeline to the Jordanian port town of Aqaba, collaborated with Israel against Syrian interests in Lebanon (to punish Assad for his support of Iran) and even attempted to acquire sophisticated Israeli military equipment.” In 1984, Saddam went so far as to voice his public support for peace negotiations with the Jewish state, emphasizing that “no Arab leader looks forward to the destruction of Israel” and that any solution to the conflict would require “the existence of a secure state for the Israelis.” (Karsh, 2002: 60) Although Arafat and Saddam met several times during the crisis and although



there had been a general view that Arafat took a pro-Saddam position during the war, the PLO official statements during the crisis denied these allegations. It was widely asserted by scholars, such as Post (1993), Long (2002) and Karsh and Rautsi (2002) that, Arafat and the Palestinian cause were instrumental for the Saddam regime to mobilize people, however these causes were never considered a priority for Saddam.

### **LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THE SELECTION OF DIVERSIONARY STRATEGIES**

As discussed above, Saddam Hussein's use of diversionary strategies during the Gulf Crisis provides important insights into the politics of the Middle East, the diversionary theory of war and the relationship between leadership traits and the selection of diversionary strategies. Some of the outcomes of this case study are summarized below.

First of all, Saddam Hussein's use of diversionary strategies demonstrates that leaders of states, other than the US and great powers, are also able to employ these strategies in order to deflect the attention of their people from domestic problems. Although as classical diversionary theorists have contended, the existence of a powerful army and sufficient economic resources may provide a comparative advantage to leaders of great powers in using diversionary war and military strikes when they face domestic problems, the availability of less costly and less risky diversionary options makes leaders of other states also able to employ these strategies to attain the same goals. As stated above, after the eight-year war with Iran, Iraq had many domestic problems, including an ailing economy and an increasingly volatile society. As stated by observers of Iraqi politics, it was not possible for Saddam Hussein's regime to fix these issues within a very short period of time. In light of this factor, Saddam Hussein attempted to divert the attention of the Iraqi people and of Arab public opinion by threatening Israel in the first months of the crisis. Threatening to use force against Israel was a less costly and less risky strategy on the part of Iraq than actually using force against Israel.

Hussein did not consider actually using force against Israel, for despite the constant mobilization of Iraqi society, there was no way for Iraq to wage a long and costly war against Israel with the economic conditions as they were and without the endorsement of one of its Arab neighbors and none of Israel's neighbors would be willing to engage in an armed conflict with Israel at that particular moment of time. In addition, despite his threats against Israel, Saddam Hussein managed to ensure Western governments that he did not intend to attack Israel. Although he sent missiles to Israel after the initiation of the armed conflict, the missiles didn't carry any dirty bombs or chemical weapons. The attacks were more symbolic than militarily strategic and intended to make an impact on Arab audiences. The relative success of this strategy and increasing support for Saddam Hussein shows that the threat to use force can also have a rallying effect on a society.

Saddam Hussein's use of diversionary strategies also demonstrates that leaders of authoritarian countries may use these strategies in order to deflect the attention and pressure of public opinion. The Iraqi case shows that the use of diversionary mechanisms is not particular to the leaders of democratic countries. Although Saddam Hussein was a dictator and had total control of all coercive mechanisms of the state of Iraq to suppress or punish oppositional movements, he still believed that it was vital to ensure the support of people on the streets in order to remain in power. Therefore, unlike previous studies which claim a direct relationship between democratic regimes and the use of diversionary strategies, this study suggests that diversionary strategies may be used by the leaders of any country, regardless of the form of government.

The final finding of this case study concerns the relationship between Saddam Hussein's leadership traits and his use of diversionary strategy. The leadership traits of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf Crisis reveal certain characteristics that account for the use of more conflictual diversionary strategies. The case of Saddam Hussein shows that using diversionary mechanisms is actually a form

of challenging constraints for political leaders. Leaders who are confronted with certain constraint, whether a legislative constraint of a democratic regime or popular opposition, try to cope with the constraint by either respecting it and accepting the demands of the constraint-making groups or challenging the constraints by finding ways to refuse the groups' demands. When leaders choose to challenge constraints, they have several alternatives that they can adopt. One alternative is to suppress the groups or parties creating the constraints by using force or other coercive measures. Leaders with enough authority to use force against domestic opposition, in particular, choose to suppress these groups if they think that their demands are unacceptable. The second most widespread strategy is to deflect the attention of the domestic groups from recurring domestic problems and shift their focuses to external problems. When a leader sees that suppression is not a viable strategy, due to either the size or the strength of the opposition or the possible political cost of a huge-scale strike hard campaign, the leader prefers to find a way to divert the attention of the domestic public by shifting the debate to a foreign policy issue. This strategy not only creates a temporary distraction of public attention from domestic issues to foreign policy, but it also unifies the people around the flag of the leader. Under these circumstances, the groups that were raising their voices against the political leader either join the rally around the leader or strategically mute their criticisms, recognizing the unpopularity of challenging the leader of a country in the time of an international crisis. Although most of the time this distraction is temporary in nature, it gives the leader time at a critical juncture to contemplate solutions to the domestic problems.

From earlier studies on leadership trait analysis (Hermann 2003, 2005), we already know that leaders challenge constraints in different ways. Some follow a direct way of challenging constraints whereas others skillfully use behind-the-scenes maneuvers. The study of the Iraqi case demonstrates that Saddam Hussein was a leader who made decisions on how to challenge constraints depending on circumstances. These kinds of leaders can be too direct in their threats to others and ready to use

force and in some other instances they can be indirect in their challenges. They give their decisions on a case by case basis.

From the analysis of Saddam Hussein's leadership above, we can also see that a leader with relationship focus is more likely to use diversionary mechanisms than other leaders. The leadership studies suggest that leaders with higher relationship focus are usually more sensitive to the reaction of their people and their popularity. For these leaders, domestic popularity and recognition and endorsement by their own people constitute an important part of their leadership agendas. The literature on diversionary theory of war demonstrates that leaders resort to diversionary mechanisms not only to divert the attention of their domestic publics from economic or social problems but also to rally their people around their flags and gain domestic popularity and higher approval ratings.

In fact, although in authoritarian systems, leaders may not feel accountable to the people as they are in democratic regimes, both leaders of authoritarian and democratic regimes want to stay in office and be recognized and endorsed by the people of their countries. Therefore, even leaders of authoritarian regimes may become anxious about popular protest and opposition and therefore may put special emphasis on building and maintaining relationships with their constituents. For example, Saddam Hussein knew the consequences of losing power in an authoritarian regime and observed the horrid fate of fallen leaders and their families. Because of that he was extremely eager to maintain good relations with his people, to build solidarity with his clan members, to ensure the loyalty of the minorities in his country and to guarantee the faithfulness of his soldiers. The use of foreign policy to rally the people of Iraq around his leadership and solidify their loyalty to him was an important part of his leadership strategy.

According to the leadership style assessment of Saddam Hussein, he was open to information and contextual cues on a case by case basis. Previous studies on leadership style and foreign policy have

demonstrated that leaders' openness to information plays an important role in shaping his decisions on foreign policy. Leaders who are open to information prefer to follow contextual cues. They pay attention to incoming information, evaluate the different options and then choose the appropriate foreign policy. Because diversionary behavior is a form of foreign policy, we may infer that such a relationship also exists between leadership style and the use of diversionary strategy. When leaders like Saddam Hussein, employ diversionary strategies, they prefer to follow the reactions of the public and shape their diversionary tactics in accordance with these reactions. They are able to modify and revise their strategies by following these contextual cues. Saddam Hussein's gradual intensification of his tone against Israel was partially a result of the relative success of this strategy. As he observed Arab peoples beginning to oppose the policies of their own governments and launch campaigns and rallies to stop their governments' support of the US-led international coalition, he maintained and even intensified his attacks against Israel. In fact, during the Gulf Crisis, Saddam Hussein's openness to information gave him the opportunity to analyze the outcomes of his use of diversionary strategy. After the invasion of Kuwait, he continued this strategy by employing linkage politics. Through this linkage proposal, he was able to strike another cord with the Arab public. Arabs staged demonstrations in the streets in their countries and conveyed messages of appreciation for Saddam Hussein's commitment to the Palestinian cause and his courage to challenge Israel and support of his proposal. When Saddam Hussein saw this high level of public mobilization around his policy, he intensified the use of this diversionary strategy through different mechanisms, including blaming the Zionist conspiracy for the increasing tension in the region. After the beginning of the armed conflict between coalition forces and Iraq, Saddam Hussein implemented further diversionary strategies by sending SCUD missiles to Israel, which further raised his stature among Arab public opinion.

The final leadership attribute of Saddam Hussein that was analyzed was his motivation towards the world. As the leadership trait analysis demonstrated, in Saddam Hussein's view, the world was a

conflictual place where there was good and evil. However, because of his low in-group bias, he still considered the possibilities of cooperation. From a foreign policy perspective, this worldview may account for the type of diversionary behavior that he chose during the Gulf Crisis. He selected relatively violent means of diverting the attention of his people and continuously scapegoated Zionism and Zionist forces in the United States to explain the sources of domestic economic and social problems in Iraq.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DIVERSIONARY FOREIGN POLICY OF KING HUSSEIN DURING THE GULF CRISIS**

#### **Introduction**

King Hussein of Jordan was one of the most enigmatic figures of Middle Eastern politics in the post-World War II period. He served as the King of Jordan for 47 years without interruption, which was unprecedented in the history of the Middle East. During his tenure as the King of Jordan, he was one of the most prominent political figures in the region. He was an important actor in each and every political incident in the region, including the Gulf Crisis. During this crisis, King Hussein became a key player again with his policy of active neutrality. Numerous explanations have been provided for his position of neutrality during the Gulf War, including the influence of the economy and his close rapport with Saddam Hussein (Dann, 1990). This chapter will provide an alternative explanation and focus on King Hussein's use of foreign policy for domestic purposes throughout the crisis. As stated by several scholars of Jordanian politics, King Hussein tried to divert the attention of his people from dire economic and social problems by following an active policy of mediation and an implicit support of Iraq. Although he never recognized the annexation of Kuwait

by Iraq, he did not condemn the invasion of Kuwait either. Furthermore, although towards the end of the crisis King Hussein began to criticize Operation Desert Storm and partially blamed Israel for the international campaign against Iraq, he continued his secret negotiations with Israel, consistently met with US officials and regularly sent his envoys to Western capitals to explain Jordanian policy. The leaders of Israel and many Western observers contend that Hussein's discourse during the crisis intended to influence the domestic audience. Because of that, although some of his remarks were criticized by Western leaders, he was not punished or isolated during the Gulf Crisis or in its immediate aftermath. His diversionary foreign policy made him the target of international criticisms, but also brought him unprecedented domestic popularity.

The chapter will analyze the decision making of King Hussein as a predominant leader during this conflict. After giving a brief overview of the decision context in Jordan, the authoritative decision unit in Jordan during the war will be examined. The last part of the chapter will explain the diversionary behavior of King Hussein during the conflict and assess the relationship between this behavior and his leadership traits.

### **DECISION CONTEXT**

In the last days of the 1980s, Jordan was facing serious domestic economic, social, and political problems. The economy was shattering. Decreasing worker remittances and foreign aid from the Gulf countries paved the way for chronic inflation, huge foreign debt and lack of government income to fund social services. The government was paralyzed and as a last resort, began to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reschedule foreign debts and restructure the economy, which led to the Ma'an riots. The riots, which spread to different parts of Jordan, threatened the social base of the Hashemite monarchy. Political developments in the world also threatened the future of the monarchy. For example, the overthrow of authoritarian regimes in



Central and Eastern Europe by popular protest endangered the autocracies and monarchies in the Middle East. In addition, the end of the Cold War resulted in some unexpected consequences for the Arab countries of the Middle East, including Jewish migration to Israel. This massive flow of Jewish people to Israel and the increasing number of settlements in the occupied territories constituted grave dangers to the stability of Jordan and made it more difficult to resolve the problems in the region.

Since the establishment of the Transjordanian state in the 1920s, the government of Jordan had constantly suffered economic problems.<sup>55</sup> Unlike its eastern and southern neighbors, Jordan did not have oil or natural gas and possessed only a few natural resources, such as phosphates and potash (Al-Khazendar, 1997; 29). It also had scarce water resources and little arable agricultural lands. Because of these factors, from the time of its creation, Jordan had remained mostly dependent on foreign aid from Western patrons, Gulf countries or the workers' remittances from Gulf countries.<sup>56</sup>

The Jordanian economy depended mostly on British foreign aid until the 1950s. Over time the source of foreign aid changed due to the transformations in international politics and economy. With the beginning of the Cold War, the United States replaced Britain as the main source of foreign assistance. However with the increasing oil prices in 1970s Arab countries in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia became major donors to Jordan (Cunningham, 1997: 494-495). For these donor countries, Jordan was usually an important geopolitical asset. "For Britain, Jordan's utility was as a buffer state against Wahhabi and French expansionism; for the US, Jordan emerged as a bulwark

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<sup>55</sup> For a comprehensive overview of Jordanian political economy, see Brand, Laurie A. *Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations: the Political Economy of Alliance Making*.

<sup>56</sup> For more information, see Khatib, Fawzi. "Foreign Aid and Economic Development in Jordan: An Empirical Investigation."

against Communism; for the principal Arab states, Jordan was important, both as a barrage against Israel and to avoid the kingdom becoming a client of any one of their number” (Robins, 2004: 142).

Jordan’s economic condition changed dramatically with the end of the oil boom in early 1980s and with the eruption of the war between Iran and Iraq. The economies of the Gulf countries were negatively affected by the fall of oil prices, which led to a dramatic decline in the amount of foreign aid to Jordan.<sup>57</sup> The fact that Jordan used most of the foreign aid from the Gulf States to fund public services made the effect of this decline much more serious. Secondly, the deteriorating economic conditions in the Gulf countries led to the termination of many Jordanian workers’ job contracts. According to Rath, almost 40 percent of the labor force of Jordan was employed in Gulf countries in the 1980s (approximately 350,000 people) (1994: 537). The return of many of these workers resulted in a dramatic rise in unemployment and a sharp decline in workers’ remittances, which constituted a substantial portion of Jordan’s budget (Cunningham, 1997: 505).

As a result of the external developments, the economy in Jordan faced major setbacks, in terms of foreign debt, growth rate, and inflation. With the decline in its most important sources of income, Jordan resorted to extensive domestic and external borrowing. <sup>58</sup> Jordan’s foreign debt, which was around 2 billion dollars in 1980, reached almost 9 billion dollars in 1990. The latter amount was 234 percent of the GNP of the Jordanian economy (Cunningham, 1997: 502). It was also the largest debt in the world, measured on a per capita basis (Robbins, 2004: 166). In addition, between 1985 and 1990 the annual average growth rate of the GNP was -3 percent per year (Cunningham, 1997:

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<sup>57</sup> Despite this decrease, the Gulf countries remained the major contributor to the Jordanian economy, According to Brand, Jordan received a total of 2.2. billions from Kuwait over a few years, which constituted more than 7 percent of its foreign aid package. The foreign aid from Saudi Arabia was even higher. In 1989 alone, Saudis contributed \$200 million to the Jordanian economy (Brand, 1994: 111).

<sup>58</sup> For an analysis of the balance of payments problems, see Share, Monther. "Jordan's Trade and Balance of Payment Problems."

482); and again between 1987 and 1989, the gross domestic product fell by over nine percent (1997: 505). Inflation also rose dramatically in 1988 and 1989 and the government's attempt to solve the problem led to the devaluation of the dinar by 23 percent. Finally, unemployment in Jordan reached one of the highest points in Jordanian history in 1990. In addition to the returning workers from Gulf countries, the recent graduates of universities in Jordan were also unable to find jobs. The unemployment rate was officially at 14 percent, although many observers claimed that it was as high as 20 percent. More importantly, according to Robbins, the only man who could do something about the Jordanian economy, King Hussein, was uninterested in the economy (1997: 169). Despite these negative developments in the economy, the Jordanian government was unwilling to stop providing subsidies and implemented a populist domestic economy. At the height of the economic crisis, the Council of Ministers declared the continuation of price controls in basic commodities despite rises in the prices in these commodities in the countries from which they were imported. The government decided "to pay the difference between the higher, real cost of these materials and the prices at which they will be sold to citizens" (FBIS-NES-90-040, 1 March 1989). In addition, the Jordanian government continued to spend large portions of its budget on defense spending due to its large unstable Palestinian population and its long border with Israel.

In order to cope with the economic problems, the Jordanian government invited the IMF to craft a program to restructure Jordan's economy. Under this plan, IMF would assist Jordan in restructuring its foreign debts and in return, the Jordanian government agreed to adopt some austerity measures. These measures included implementing prudent borrowing policies, strengthening foreign reserves, reducing inflation, reforming the tax system and reducing the budget deficit (Brynen, 1992: 90). Reducing the budget deficit required a decrease in government spending and an end to the subsidization of certain consumer goods. In accordance with this agreement, the government

increased the prices of a wide range of commodities, including cooking gas, gasoline, diesel fuel, bread, and cigarettes. This move was a major blow to low-income families in southern Jordan. A few hours after the announcement of price increases, spontaneous demonstrations erupted in the southern towns and cities (Rath, 1994: 540). The disturbances began among the taxi drivers in the southern city of Ma'an, who were not permitted to raise their tariffs despite the steep rise in oil prices. However, in a very short period of time, the demonstrations spread to different regions of Jordan, including the capital Amman (Cunningham, 1997: 443). In response, the government imposed curfews on some cities in the South and dispatched strong armed units to suppress the riots. Although the participants in the riots launched their protests to oppose the price increases, after a few days, they began to express their resentment regarding the al-Rifai government, particularly the nepotism and corruption of the people around the Prime Minister. In fact, early opposition to price increases was replaced with a "nation-wide struggle for a fairer distribution of wealth and a wider popular participation" (Rath, 1994: 540). Queen Noor, who was with King Hussein in the United States, candidly criticized the Jordanian government's lack of responsiveness to economic and political problems prior to the crisis. She wrote:

I knew, as did many people around me, that the rise in prices and the resulting riots were indicative of a far larger national crisis in the country. Through my own work I had seen mounting anger and frustration among our people over what they view as a lack of responsiveness to their economic hardship. Criticism of the government's autocratic policies, especially restrictions of freedom of expression, had boiled over. There were also charges of widespread corruption. My husband had been only partly apprised of the full extent of the malaise, and now he was criticized for being out of touch. In a sense it was true. His focus on the search for peace and on mobilizing international support for his impoverished nation had consumed most of his time

and energy and he had not been actively monitoring the government, which was responsible for the day-to-day running of the country (2003: 290-291).

The fact that the riots originated from the stronghold of the Hashemite monarchy was an alarming development for King Hussein. The region had been known as the bedrock constituency for the House of Hashim since the emergence of the Jordanian state (Ryan, 1998: 393). During the economic boom in Jordan, most of the state's resources were disproportionately "directed towards the provision of services and infrastructure to those areas of the country predominantly populated by Transjordanian rather than Palestinian citizens. Government employment and benefits were thus particularly important for East Bankers, of whom perhaps three quarters were employed in the public sector" (Brynen, 1992: 82). The IMF austerity measures disproportionately affected the southern region of the country and the resulting anger of the people in the South was a major problem for the Kingdom, as Hussein had always viewed these people as the guarantee of the regime's survival. Eighty percent of the army, including his palace lieutenants, the royal guards, and individuals placed in other strategic positions in the army and the security services, had been recruited from these southern towns. As a result of the new economic policy, the people of the South turned their back on the regime and began attacking symbols of the Hashemite Kingdom, including bringing down and tearing apart Jordanian flags. They also attacked local government buildings and institutions (Salloukh, 2000: 125). The only calm cities in Jordan were those populated with Palestinian refugees. The Palestinian-dominated cities and the North were less affected by the austerity measures than southern Jordan, which was largely dependent on government subsidies.<sup>59</sup> However, in addition to the riots' demographic and geographic origins, their timing was alarming for

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<sup>59</sup> Later, in an interview, King Hussein thanked the Palestinian people and the PLO for their pacifying roles during the demonstrations. See FBIS-NES 2704091089, 28 April, 1989.

King Hussein. He was particularly worried about the spread of the intifada to Jordan as a result of these riots.

The riots were a huge blow and a serious embarrassment for King Hussein. Eight people died in the clashes between protesters and security forces and dozens were wounded. Although the incidents lasted only four days, their ramifications were more enduring. In order to appease the rioters, King Hussein decided to respond some of their demands. He quickly accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Rifai and appointed Zeid bin Shaker as Prime Minister. In order to allow the angry protesters to blow off steam, King Hussein decided to hold the first general election in Jordan in more than twenty years (Ashton, 2008: 254). In addition, he promised to form a national charter, a new social contract between the state and the society. However, as stated by Robinson, the regime initiated this attempt at democratization in order to strengthen its legitimacy, not to yield to domestic forces (1998: 391). 60

The events in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s also influenced state-society relations in Jordan. According to Cunningham, the Jordanian people were caught in the idea that democracy meant economic prosperity and international support (1997: 444) King Hussein and the Hashemite Monarchy were concerned about the effects of these global political movements on Jordanian society. The fate of authoritarian leaders in Central and Eastern Europe was also a wake-up call for

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60 Although the elections took place in a peaceful environment a few months after the riots, they were not completely democratic. Political parties were banned from the elections. The campaign period was less than a month and therefore was insufficient for most of the candidates to organize effective campaigns. Radio, television and the Arabic-language newspapers remained government-owned and controlled during the elections (Vandenberg, 2000: 116). Moreover, the elections took place while martial law was still effect in Jordan (Robinson, 1998: 392). In addition, the Election Law was biased toward Bedouin and rural areas, which were considered the pillars of Hashemite legitimacy. "For instance, the three largest urban centers - Amman, Irbid City and Zarqa - represented about 65 per cent of the total population but were allocated only 45 per cent of the parliamentary seats. The trend became even clearer when contrasting the populous Second District of Amman, which had over 73,000 registered voters and was allocated three seats, to the Governorate of Ma'an with 28,000 registered voters and an allotment of five seats" (Rath, 1994: 547).

Middle Eastern leaders who had been against regime changes for decades. Under these domestic and international circumstances, a popular uprising against Hussein's rule would find a great deal of support within Jordan and might result in the overthrow of the Hashemite Monarchy.

Another major issue that threatened the stability of the Jordan was its large Palestinian population. The Palestinian problem was regarded as the most significant domestic problem of Jordan since the 1970s. As stated by Kleiman:

No issue has such potential for tearing apart the body politic reconstructed on the East Bank in the aftermath of the 1970s crisis as does the constant testing of Hussein's subjects in Amman and the adjacent refugee camps in terms of their true loyalty to the Hashemite Crown and to the concept of a Jordanian entity. As tribalism continues to recede and is replaced by nationalism as the chief unifier, the ground is being laid for a clash between two competing and possibly antithetical nationalist allegiances: a Jordanian identity and a Palestinian one. To the extent that such a confrontation is forced out into the open, it could well threaten to expose Jordan as a divided society and a dual monarchy. So long as this issue remains dormant, East Bank Palestinians and their true political loyalties will remain the great enigma to the Hashemite Kingdom and the Jordanian political process (1988: 128).

Palestinians constituted around sixty percent of Jordan's population and the majority of them lived in big cities, including Amman. Since they fled to Jordan from their lands in Palestine, their resistance to integration within Jordan society had always been a major source of concern for the Jordanian administration. During the late 1980s, the situation became more serious with the increasing frustration of Palestinians from the status quo and their mobilization as a result of the intifada of their counterparts in the West Bank. Jordan's decision to disengage from the West Bank

in 1988 and its recognition of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole representative of the Palestinian people did not eradicate the problems. Although they were not well-armed and organized like the Palestinian fedayeen groups of the 1970s, sporadic protests were recurrent in the refugee camps and there was a possibility of the spread of these protests to Amman. This would endanger the domestic stability of Jordan and King Hussein did not have the same support of the southern Bedouin groups as he had had in the 1970s when they tirelessly defended him against assassination and coup attempts. Most of these Bedouin groups were among those who had revolted against King Hussein a year before and Hussein had still not repaired his stature among these people (Sayidh, 1991: 175). The launch of the intifada in the West Bank in the late 1980s made the situation of the region more unstable. The East Banker Palestinians were following the developments closely and trying to support their West Banker counterparts through rallies and demonstrations. King Hussein was extremely concerned about the spread of the intifada to Jordan which would pull the state of Jordan into a conflict with Israel.

The events that took place in the West Bank during the Gulf War aggravated the situation for the Jordanian government. In May 1990, an Israeli citizen in Rishon LeZion killed eight Palestinian workers waiting at a bus stop, which triggered riots in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, leading to the deployment of tanks in Amman (Baram, 1991: 61). More than 60 people were wounded in demonstrations at the al-Baqah refugee camp and the way that Jordanian security forces handled the riots caused huge resentment among the Jordanian people, particularly among the Palestinian refugees (FBIS- NES 90-100, 23 May 1990).

Another critical issue that endangered the social and political stability of Jordan during this time was Jewish immigration to Israel. After the opening of the borders of the Soviet Union, thousands of Jews from the Soviet Union migrated to Israel and the United States. The Israeli government



welcomed the influx of Jews for demographic reasons. The rate of migration was alarming to many Arab countries, particularly to Jordan and King Hussein. The migrants were arriving at the rate of 1400 people a week and being settled in the Occupied Territories in violation of the international agreements. According to projections, by the summer of 1991, there would be around 100,000 settlers in the Occupied Territories, and 127,000 in East Jerusalem (Noor, 2003: 300). King Hussein considered the Jewish migration a significant threat to the security and survival of the Jordanian state. For King Hussein, Israel's policy was not only a step toward the Palestinization of the Jordanian state, but was also an affront to the Middle Eastern peace process. Although the issue was placed on the agenda of the Arab Cooperation Council in February and although King Hussein conveyed the concern of the Jordanian people to the leaders of the United States and Western countries, attempts to stop the mass migration of Jews to Israel proved futile.

### **KING HUSSEIN: THE KING/ THE PREDOMINANT LEADER**

King Hussein became the King of Jordan when he was only eighteen years old. He did not have prior political experience other than accompanying King Abdullah to some diplomatic negotiations and meeting with foreign dignitaries. Although King Abdullah had started to prepare him for the throne, the preparation time was insufficient because of Abdullah's sudden death. When Hussein became the King of Jordan, he had little knowledge of the intricacies of Jordanian domestic politics and of the complexities of its relations with the Great Britain. In addition, his education abroad estranged him from Jordanian society to a great extent. Furthermore, King Talal's liberal political reforms during his short tenure made politics in Jordan more complicated than ever before. Even more importantly, the British officers in the Jordanian government were playing a bigger role than just being advisors. Both the intelligence operations and the Jordanian army were run by the British officers who were much more experienced and knowledgeable about Jordan than King Hussein.

Despite these unfavorable conditions, King Hussein managed to establish his control over the government and society shortly after his enthronement. By using different strategies, he was able to become the predominant leader of Jordan and the ultimate foreign policy decision maker. As stated by Klieman, few can recall a Jordan without him as the head of state and few can speak about politics in the Middle East without mentioning his role (1988: 12).

King Hussein employed multiple strategies in order to enhance his grip over Jordanian society and government. When he ascended to the throne, the constitution of Jordan recognized the political system as a hereditary monarchy and gave a lot of power to the king. The king was vested with executive powers as well as the right to appoint and dismiss prime ministers and cabinet ministers. He also had the right to appoint the members of the Upper House and call elections. However, Hussein's father had also integrated some liberal principles into the constitution, such as a higher level of legislative authority and basic rights and freedoms for civil society as well as the press. In his first years as the king, Hussein extended these freedoms and liberties. The legislative elections, which took place in 1956, were considered the freest election in the history of Jordan (Rath, 1994: 532).

The democratization in Jordan, however, did not last long because the political liberties and free elections placed King Hussein under constant pressure by civil society in his handling of foreign policy. Although constitutionally King Hussein had the authority to determine the direction of foreign policy and alignment choices, the new active and open civil society proved to be a major stumbling block for King Hussein. The debate about the Baghdad Pact was the first demonstration of the impact of democratization on Hussein's foreign policy decision making. The empowerment of the public also resulted in the increasing influence of government vis-à-vis the palace in

determining foreign policy orientation of Jordan.<sup>61</sup> In addition, the rise of Pan-Arabism, particularly the increasing influence of Nasserism, and the organization and empowerment of communist groups began to jeopardize the future of monarchy in the country. King Hussein was discontented with these developments and realized that if his regime was to survive, he needed to protect himself from attempts to shift political power away from his throne (Thompson, 1999: 122). In order to achieve his regime security, he decided to halt the process of democratization and strengthen his position vis-à-vis the government, civil society and the parliament (Rath, 1994: 534). His first step was imposing martial law in Jordan under the pretexts of civil disturbance and a coup attempt against the monarchy by officers close to the Prime Minister. During the imposition of martial law, political parties were banned, members of opposition groups were either exiled or sent to prison, and freedom of the press was curtailed. In addition, Hussein bolstered the capacity of intelligence agencies; he gave them necessary authorization to monitor dissent groups and individuals (Vandenberg, 2000: 95). After the Yom Kippur War in 1973, King Hussein further extended his executive powers and dismissed the House of Representatives. During the absence of a legislative assembly, which lasted several years, the “regime relied to a great extent on a system of royal decrees, regional military governors and special security courts to provide it with an administrative and judicial framework” (Rath, 1994: 541).

King Hussein continued to consolidate his rule and authority in Jordan throughout the 1970s and 1980s through both formal and informal methods. When the Gulf Crisis erupted between Iraq and Kuwait on the eastern border of Jordan, King Hussein still retained his position as the predominant

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61 According to Alberts, there were two events that demonstrated the increasing effect of the government. The first was “Prime Minister’s Nabulsi’s establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the intimation of perhaps even recognizing the Chinese People’s National Republic.” In addition to this, Nabulsi “broadcasted from Amman radio that his government did not want nor need the aid coming from the Western Bloc (United States) and that Jordan’s government would accept all and any aid coming from the Soviet Union” (1973: 18)

power of Jordan. The articles of the 1952 Jordanian constitution that vested executive power in King Hussein were still in effect. Among those, Article 16 stated:

The Executive Power shall be vested in the King, who shall exercise his powers through his Ministers in accordance with the provisions of the present Constitution.

He also had legislative and executive rights, as set forth in Articles 34 and 35;

The King appoints the Prime Minister and may dismiss him or accept his resignation. He appoints the Ministers; he also dismisses them or accepts their resignation, upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

(i) The King issues orders for the holding of elections to the Chamber of Deputies in accordance with the provisions of the law.

(ii) The King convenes the National Assembly, inaugurates, adjourns, and prorogues it in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

(iii) The King may dissolve the Chamber of Deputies.

(iv) The King may dissolve the Senate or relieve any Senator of his membership.

King Hussein used this power frequently during his reign. Between 1953 and 1989, a period of thirty-six years he dismissed 39 prime ministers. It became commonplace for him to ask for the resignation of the prime minister when there was a serious economic and social crisis in Jordan.

King Hussein also had immunity from any kind of judicial or legislative oversight. According to this article in Jordan's constitution:

The King is the Head of the State and is immune from any liability and responsibility.

The constitution also gave total control of the armed forces of Jordan to the king with Article 32:

The King is the Supreme Commander of the Land, Naval and Air Forces.

Article 33 of the constitution gave King Hussein full authority over Jordan's foreign policy.

The King declares war, concludes peace and ratifies treaties and agreement.

The cabinet was only an executive arm of the king and had no power in the making of foreign policy decisions. Throughout the Gulf Crisis, King Hussein was formulating Jordan's foreign policy all by himself and participating in the implementation of these decisions. The prime minister was King Hussein's loyal cousin bin Shaker and also was not involved in the decision making process (Al-Khazendar, 1997: 26). In addition, even the foreign ministry did not have input in the foreign policy decisions. As Curtis Ryan succinctly captured:

Contrary to what one might expect from its portfolio, the Jordanian foreign ministry is among the least influential institutions in Jordanian foreign policy. The foreign minister and his ministry have virtually no role in the decision making process, and little role even in advice or consultation. Instead, the foreign ministry has a predominantly executive function. It is charged with the implementation of decisions that have already been made elsewhere. In addition, the foreign minister has the role of representing Jordan abroad, and articulating its foreign policy to other countries. Yet even this role is often circumscribed by the king, who frequently prefers his personally designated envoys to carry out this function of representing the kingship

and the Jordanian policy. These representatives are most often selected from among the trusted advisers (2002: 68).

As shown above, the constitution vested the king with extraordinary power. Throughout years, he crafted a role for himself above the state machinery (Lucas, 2000: 76).

From the very early days of his rule, Hussein also solidified his rule through strict limitations on the press and civil society organizations. One of the earliest examples of these laws was the Law of Societies and Social Organizations of 1966, which was implemented to curb any form of domestic political mobilization (Wiktorowicz, 1999: 609-610). The 1973 Press and Publication Law imposed limitations on freedom of the press and expression, and the Law on Resistance to Communism outlawed communist political activity and was used extensively against Jordanian and Palestinian leftist groups. In addition, the Law on Public Assemblies significantly constrained freedom of association and the Labour Law of 1960 gave the ministers extensive discretionary powers over trade union activities (Brynen, 1992: 77). Finally, the Emergency Defense Regulations provided pretexts for the regime to curb the emergence of political opposition (Salloukh, 1994: 81).

In addition to using his constitutional powers, King Hussein utilized the coercive mechanisms of the state apparatus to control Jordanian society, to quell the opposition groups and suppress disturbances. He also empowered his loyalists and bolstered the intelligence agencies within the country. In fact, “rewarding loyalists and removing those who have lost the palace’s favor was a basic tool for cooptation and thus of regime power” (Vandenberg, 2000: 93 and Harknett and Vandenberg, 1997: 132). King Hussein particularly selected members of the loyal Bedouin tribes, such as the Huwaytat, the Bani Skhr, and the Sirhan to serve in the elite Royal Guards and officer corps. The members of these tribes were also lavished with material and political awards in order to maintain their loyalty to the regime (Salloukh, 1994: 80).

King Hussein tried to ensure the gathering of information and intelligence about different segments of his society. He paid particular attention to monitoring the political activities of civil society organizations, trade unions and political parties, especially leftist groups, whether or not they had connections with the Soviet Union and Arab nationalists, including the Ba'athists, pan-Arabists, and Nasserists and active members of the Palestinian groups. In addition, to discourage people from participating in these organizations and to make the bureaucracy an opposition-free zone, the regime asked the Jordanian people to have "a clean history", which entailed having official clearance papers and certificates of good behavior. Of course in most instances "good behavior" meant to stay loyal to the Royal Court and not to participate in any oppositional political activity.

During his reign, King Hussein cultivated an image for himself as the defender of Arabs and a father of the Jordanian nation. His posters and pictures always presented him as a father figure and as the head of the extended Jordanian family. According to Salloukh, with these strategies, "Hussein tapped into the existing patriarchal social structure to rally support from the traditional sectors of society, especially the Bedouin tribes, whose first loyalty is to the family" (2000: 88). In addition, the Hashemites' status "as descendents of the Prophet Muhammad and their historical role as guardians of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina provided King Hussein with a degree of religious legitimacy and insulated him from some of the criticisms and challenges that other leaders of the region faced from Islamist groups" (Vandenberg 2000: 101). He also frequently asserted his nationalist credentials by emphasizing the significance of his great-grandfather Sharif Hussein and his grandfather King Abdullah for leading the Arab revolt during World War I and for bringing about the emergence of independent Arab nations in the Middle East.

In sum, the regime in Jordan during the Gulf Crisis was dominated by King Hussein, its Transjordanian allies and the coopted Palestinians (Salloukh, 2000: 74). Vandenberg characterized

the regime as “Husseinism” (Vandenberg, 2000: 74). During his tenure, King Hussein was always the predominant leader in terms of foreign policy and had the authority to commit the resources of his country to a certain foreign policy goal. He also had interest in implementing his foreign policy decision (Ryan, 2002: 79). This was obvious from his engagement in regional, international, and Arab affairs, his recurrent trips abroad, and his constant meetings with foreign leaders. As Al-Khazendar stated, King Hussein tried to be aware of most of the details of Jordan’s foreign policy. He also did not empower his representatives in the realms of foreign and security policy as he did in issues related to internal affairs (1997: 20). Neither the cabinet nor the parliament had any say in the foreign policy decisions of the king during the Gulf War. He was the predominant leader and all other people, including ambassadors and foreign policy officials, were just implementers of his decisions. Moreover, he was the controller of the means of force and had the ability to reverse foreign policy decisions that he made during the Gulf Crisis. In fact, as Al-Zu’bi stated in 1991:

The Jordanian political system has continued to revolve around His Majesty King Hussein ...Foreign policy and decision making are in his domain. It is the King who outlines Jordan foreign policy and supervises its implementation. He is considered crucial for the execution of foreign policy through his global relations and the utilization of his personal relations and the utilization of his personal relations with many world leaders. His political beliefs, his reason and his experience as a ruler mean he can establish strong personal relations with leaders of the world and establish good bilateral relations between Jordan and other states. (232-233)



## **KING HUSSEIN'S LEADERSHIP STYLE**

The leadership profile of King Hussein is based on an analysis of his interview responses by Profiler +, developed by Hermann (2005). His interview responses will be assessed in order to understand the relationship between his leadership traits and his selection of diversionary strategy. During the Gulf Crisis, King Hussein and Prince Hassan were two of the most visible personalities from the Middle East in the Western media and capitals. From the very beginning of the crisis, King Hussein made numerous trips to meet with the leaders of the Arab countries as well as with foreign policy officials of Western European countries and the United States. His personal friendships with Western leaders allowed him to meet with them at short notice and his close rapport with Saddam Hussein allowed him to carry messages to and from Hussein and conduct shuttle diplomacy at the beginning of the crises. Both his trips abroad and his meetings in Jordan were widely covered by news agencies. During these trips and meetings, he also gave numerous interviews to journalists and conducted press conferences with the foreign dignitaries. However, like Saddam Hussein, he gave few interviews to domestic media and preferred to make public speeches when he wanted to address the people of Jordan. The number of interviews he granted to Jordanian media outlets and newspapers was far less than the number of interviews he gave to foreign correspondents. Considering the focus of this research, these domestic interviews will be taken into account. All of these interviews were conducted in 1990 and 1991 during the Gulf Crisis.

King Hussein	Interview	Norming Group Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Compared Norming Group
Belief in Controlling Events	0.25	0.32	0.04	Low
Need for Power	0.26	0.25	0.03	Moderate
Conceptual Complexity	0.52	0.58	0.03	Low
Self-Confidence	0.57	0.36	0.10	High
Task Orientation	0.58	0.59	0.06	Moderate
Distrust of Others	0.09	0.18	0.06	Low
In-Group Bias	0.12	0.13	0.02	Moderate

Table 3: Leadership Style of King Hussein

### *Challenging Constraints*

According to the leadership trait analysis, King Hussein's score on "need for power" is moderate compared to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders and his score on "belief in controlling events" is low compared to his norming group. These scores demonstrate that King Hussein respected constraints during the Gulf Crisis but he also evaluated the situation on a case by case basis. His policies during and immediately after the Gulf War show that he respected some of the regional and domestic constraints. For instance, his constant emphasis on the fact that he did not recognize the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq was respecting the challenge of the international coalition, led by the United States. In addition to this, despite overlooking some breaches of international sanctions by the Jordanian groups, his recognition of the sanctioned regime was a form of respecting constraints of the UN system. In addition, although he enjoyed the rallying of Palestinians in Jordan around his flag during the Gulf Crisis, his support for the linkage politics of Saddam Hussein was also a result of respecting the constraints of the political demands of Palestinians within Jordanian territories. He knew that the possible spread of the intifada to the Jordanian territories would be detrimental to the rule of the Hashemite Kingdom in Jordan, and because of that the political demands of the Palestinian groups were recognized by King Hussein. In his memoirs of the Gulf War, former Secretary of State James Baker also raised this issue and emphasized King Hussein's position during the Gulf War as a result of his concern about domestic constraints, particularly the Palestinian groups. 62

### *Openness to Information*

According to the leadership trait analysis, King Hussein's score on "conceptual complexity" is low in comparison to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders and his score on "self-confidence" is high

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62 See Baker, James A. and Thomas M. DeFrank. *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace 1989-1992*.

in comparison to his norming group. A low score in “conceptual complexity” together with a high score in “self-confidence” demonstrate that King Hussein was close to information and contextual cues during the Gulf Crisis.

Some of King Hussein’s biographers and the observers of Jordanian politics have asserted that Hussein usually relied on his political instincts and experiences in making foreign policy decisions (Shlaim, 2008). He was reportedly an intensely private man who did not rely on anyone (Klieman, 1988). This characteristic of King Hussein’s personality was most obvious in his selection and use of advisors. He had a limited number of political advisors around him when he was making these decisions. One reason for this was his lack of trust in the politicians and political operatives in Jordan. In his autobiography, Hussein linked this distrust to the political events that had taken place after the assassination of his grandfather in Jerusalem. He stated:

I can see now, these men of dignity and high estate, doubled up, cloaked figures scattering like bent old terrified women. That picture, far more than the face of the assassin, has remained with me ever since as a constant reminder of the frailty of political devotion...

...I could go back to Victoria, away from the power lust and avarice that followed my grandfather’s death as rapacious politicians fought for the crumbs of office, sullen, determined, hating each other, like the money-hungry relatives who gather at the reading of the will.

Within a matter of hours the politicians were starting to fight. There were those who whispered, Was my father well enough to succeed to the throne? They were the ones who hoped he would never reign, simply because they themselves wanted power. Powerless for the moment, I was forced to watch how some of his former friends

changed without a thought for our country: I saw his great work jeopardized by weakness on the part of those around him, by the way they permitted opportunists to step in, even if it meant the ruin of little Jordan. (Hussein, 1962: 8-9, 25)

According to Klieman, Hussein's distrust of political operatives was reinforced during his first few years in office. He argued that:

Hussein's sense of isolation was probably reinforced by reports of intrigues against him in earlier years from within the royal court. The principal alleged conspirator in the 1957 aborted was Ali Abu Nuwar, previously a close confidant of the King. Again, Hussein felt betrayed by Nasser in 1967 and by Sadat both in 1974 and 1977, when the Egyptian leader paid his surprise visit to Jerusalem. (1988: 124)

For other biographers of Hussein, like Shlaim, another reason for his repugnance toward political operatives and advisors was his disappointment with the performance of many of his advisors during the first few years of his reign. For Shlaim, one of the decisive moments with regard to this issue was the Suez Crisis, and the resistance of King Hussein's advisors to his insistence on joining the conflict on the side of Egyptians.

Hussein was young and impetuous, and he acted with a rush of sudden energy. He had the scent of battle in his nostrils and was bitterly disappointed by the attitude of his advisers. Prince Hassan recalls Hussein's frustration: "My brother wanted to make his own mark...he was thwarted by not having a confrontation in 1956." (2008; 122)

In fact, trust in his own intuition and ignorance and indifference toward the views of those around him became powerful themes in his worldview. This attitude was reflected in his frequent changes of prime ministers and the high-level officials around him.

On the rare occasions when King Hussein did involve advisors in the decision making, they were either extreme loyalists or family members, such as his uncle Sharif Nasser bin Jamil, his cousin Sharif Zaid bin Shaker, and his brother Prince Hassan. The relationship of some of these advisors to King Hussein and their influence on decision making led to some controversies within Jordan. As Shlaim stated:

There was increasingly loud criticism of the royal family for....surrounding themselves with sycophants who kept them in ignorance of the true state of the nation...

Sharif Nasser was controversial because of his forceful personality and ostentatious lifestyle. He liked hunting, riding and fast cars, women, drinking and gambling. Hussein's uncle appeared to outsiders to be one of his closest advisors, friends, and supporters... An ultraconservative monarchist who was entirely dependent on the king's favour, he was also one of the regime's strongest bulwarks and was known to maintain an extensive intelligence network within the army... Nevertheless his image was poor; he was feared and hated by Palestinians throughout the kingdom... (2008: 308-309)

King Hussein's closeness to information was particularly observable in issue areas where Hussein thought he had sufficient knowledge and capacity. Foreign and security policy was on the top of this list. As mentioned above, he had been a predominant leader in Jordan in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy decisions for almost four decades. Although he never received formal education in foreign politics and diplomacy, he acquired substantial confidence and familiarity with foreign policy-related issues during his tenure. He also developed a rapport and friendly relations with various statesmen in the Middle East and around the world. The historical

records proved that he made the most critical foreign policy decisions of his reign, either by himself, or with a group of advisors who had already proven that they had the same views as King Hussein. These critical policy decisions included the decision to engage in armed conflict with Israel in 1967, the decision to expel fedayeen groups from Amman from 1970 to 1971, the decision not to engage in direct armed conflict with Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the decision to condemn Egypt during the Camp David meetings, the decision to support Iraq against Iran during the Iran-Iraq War, and the decision to disengage from the West Bank in 1988.

Scholars and journalists who observed and analyzed the decision making mechanisms in Amman pointed out King Hussein's closeness to information during the Gulf Crisis. Even though there were several advisors around Hussein, he was most often indifferent to their recommendations. As explained above, King Hussein had displayed this attitude even before the initiation of the armed conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. According to Ashton, he was warned about the seriousness of the problem between Iraq and Kuwait during the first days of the crisis by Prime Minister Qasim. However, King Hussein "was not very pleased by the warning, preferring instead to trust his own instinct that the crisis could be managed" (2008: 265). Later, after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the formation of the international coalition in the Gulf, King Hussein again refused to follow the suggestions of his close aides -- including his cousin Zaid bin Shaker, his brother Prince Hasan, and his loyal advisor Adnan Abu Obdeh -- to assume a more vociferous role in condemning the takeover (Shulman, 2008: 177). Instead, he chose to follow his instincts and single-handedly crafted his foreign policy. King pursued this policy up until the end of the crisis. He also wrote by himself the speech that he gave to the Jordan public in February 1991, which was considered the most open statement of his support for Saddam Hussein. According Ashton the speech was:

Hussein's authentic, unvarnished personal voice. His two main speechwriters at the time were both surprised when the King let them see an advance draft of what he intended to say. Abu Odeh, who received a call from the King asking him to work on the draft whilst he was in discussion with Zeid bin Shaker, was shocked when he received the provisional text. He telephoned the King immediately to advise him that the wording was far too strong and that he shouldn't make the speech at all. The King was not at all pleased with Abu Odeh's advice and sent the speech to his other speechwriter instead. (2008: 279)

#### *Motivation by Problem or Relationship*

King Hussein's leadership trait analysis during the Gulf Crisis demonstrates that his score in "motivation for seeking office" is moderate compared to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders. This score indicates that King Hussein was focusing on a particular task or on a relationship on case by case basis. He was flexible enough to change his task depending on the situation. As mentioned above in Chapter Three, this score is contrary to the general belief that authoritarian leaders do not need to deal with the public or worry about forming relationships. However, Jordan faced many economic and social problems during the Gulf War and King Hussein was very concerned about the fate of his regime and his survival. Under these circumstances, his main aims became maintaining the loyalty of his constituents, unifying the diverse ethnic and religious groups under the flag of Jordan and increasing the morale of the Jordanian army and society. Although the regime in Jordan was an authoritarian one and King Hussein had extensive constitutional and legal powers and had great capacity to use violence against those who challenges his rule, he still needed the support and backing of his people.



In fact, King Hussein took into consideration the opinion of the public in his country in some circumstances and focused on his task in some other times during the Gulf Crisis. However, the biographers of King Hussein and analysts of his policies report his focus on public opinion and his goal of unifying the people of Jordan under his leadership. According to Uriel Dann, an important constant in Hussein's leadership was his need, throughout his reign, for constant popular support as a necessary complement to the basically elitist characteristics of the Hashemite regime. This factor distinguished King Hussein from his predecessors. For Dann,

His grandfather and true predecessor, King Abdullah..... belonged to another world where populism was incomprehensible. That Hussein's world should be different is of course part of a historic process; however, in part it is also a strain, in Hussein's personality that was absent from his grandfather's- the need to feel in rapport with the mass of his subjects. The specific thrusts of these populist appeals or policies varied from time to time, depending on the dominant elements in the changing scene as well as on Hussein's reading of those scenes. (1990)

This attitude was observable during the Gulf Crisis. In one of the most important political crises in the recent history of the Middle East, he again tried to unify his people around his flag by stressing the commonalities of the people of Jordan. He knew that the regional crisis in the Middle East constituted an important threat for the survival of the Arab leaders and therefore prioritized the policies that will unite his people and boost his popularity among the people of Jordan. Throughout the crisis, an emphasis on the shared destiny and future of Arabs constituted an important part of King Hussein's discourse. In an interview, he stated:

We have stood with Arab brethren whenever this area was threatened. We have stood and contributed, we believe, to stability in this area. We've given our best and we'll

continue to do so for cohesion, for resolving problems, for creating of this Arab world, the Arab world we speak about, turning that into reality, of the family living in cohesion, to trust and confidence amongst its members. Our dreams are the dreams of our fathers and forefathers since the Arab awakening; for the securing Arab rights, the rights of the Arab people to live in peace, to live with dignity, and securing a better future for the generations to come.

We are Arabs. We belong to this nation, and we as leaders bear a great responsibility – our responsibility towards the Arab people. If we can fulfill our responsibilities with dignity, upholding the Arab people's dignity, safeguarding the Arab people's interest, that is what we do and what we have done. (FBIS-NES-90-154, 9 Aug 1990)

### *Motivation towards the World*

According to his leadership trait analysis, King Hussein's score on "distrust of others" and "in-group-bias" are both low compared to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders. According to these scores, King Hussein did not perceive the world as a threatening place. Contrary to those who see the world in Hobbesian terms, he did not consider conflict an inevitable part of the international system. For him, international cooperation was both possible and feasible and there were international arenas where this cooperation could be achieved. In fact, leaders like King Hussein perceived conflicts as context-specific and needed to react to them on a case-by-case basis. He knew that his country needed to deal with certain constraints but he also believed that there was some flexibility in how to respond foreign policy events. His main focus was on taking advantage of opportunities and relationships (Hermann, 2005: 200). In an interview he expressed his belief that the international conflict can be avoided through dialogue with the following statement:

I believe that the area is passing through one of the most dangerous crises it's ever faced. And I believe the slide continues. Hopefully it can be halted. We will certainly do whatever we can towards that end. We are obviously amazed and possibly optimistic even at this moment in seeing how the world community can be mobilized and galvanized to achieve an objective; optimistic after long years of disappointment in the ability of the world to come together to uphold principles and ideals and apply the Charter of the United Nations on problems throughout the world equally. Hopefully, this new trend will be applied wherever and whenever and on whomsoever merits this kind of world attention. (FBIS-NES-90-154, 9 August 1990)

During the Gulf Crisis, King Hussein consistently raised the possibility of solving problems diplomatically and rejected the notion that the use of force was necessary. He emphasized the possibility of regional cooperation to peacefully resolve the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait. He tried not to antagonize any state in his speeches and refrained from blaming anyone for the crisis. He also criticized those who saw the world as black and white. In an interview with a Japanese TV station, King Hussein stated:

We found a very strange phenomena in the world, though many of our old friends adopted the attitude that you are either with us or against us. The answer is that neither with you nor against you. But I am against war, against the destruction that can occur, against creating wounds that might cause a lot of damage, material losses, the environment to suffer, may be even beyond this area. (FBIS-NES-91-127, 2 July 1991)

King Hussein also expressed his belief in solving problems peacefully in the region and in the possibility of cooperation among Arab countries. In another interview he stated that:

I feel very, very strongly that Arab solutions to Arab problems are possible. And if I didn't believe that, I wouldn't be wasting my time. And every moment of my time in point of fact has been devoted to halting the escalation of this crisis and beginning to defuse it. And I believe very much indeed that there is an Arab role to be played. Jordan has tried, but with the help of others, hopefully we will continue and we will succeed while you are in touch with the realities of this world and the rest of the world. (FBIS-NES-90-164, 23 August, 1990)

### **THE USE OF DIVERSIONARY FOREIGN POLICY**

During his rule until the Gulf War, Hussein was known to be a stable, pro-Western Arab leader in a region increasingly viewed as full of radical and hostile forces to the West. During this period, he aligned Jordan with the United States and other Western powers in most regional crises, including the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis and the bombings of the US Marine barracks in Beirut (Friedenberg, 2000; 78). In addition to this, he built very close personal relations with Western leaders, including Margaret Thatcher and George H.W. Bush.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, Hussein constructed a relatively collegial relationship with the leaders of Israel and earned their trust. After the 1967 War, he refrained from engaging in an armed conflict with Israel and from directly supporting Arab troops during the war in 1973. Although he condemned the Camp David Accords and Sadat's visit to Tel Aviv, he did not do these things because he was against peace but because he was in favor of an international conference to solve all of the problems between Israel and Arab countries.

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<sup>63</sup> The rapport between Bush and King Hussein dated back to the early 1970s when Bush was the ambassador of the US to the United Nations. They consolidated this friendship when Bush served as the director of the CIA during the mid-1970s. During Bush's vice-presidency and after Bush became the president of the United States, Bush and Hussein exchanged numerous letters and met frequently to discuss issues related to Middle East politics. (Ashton, 2008: 258-259)

However, during the Gulf War, Hussein found himself in a major dilemma. Although he had known that there was trouble between Kuwait and Iraq, he had not realized that it would become an international issue.<sup>64</sup> In his meetings with Kuwaiti leaders, he had opined that Saddam Hussein would not use force against Kuwait.<sup>65</sup> King Hussein had believed that he knew and understood Saddam Hussein. During the Iran- Iraq war, the two leaders had developed a political as well as personal rapport. They had met at least once a month to evaluate political developments in the region. King Hussein had also become a friend of Saddam Hussein's family and Saddam Hussein's wife Sajida had regularly called on him to mediate family feuds. For all of these reasons, King Hussein had been pretty confident about his political instincts regarding Saddam Hussein's intentions and during their meetings, Saddam Hussein had never given King Hussein signs of his intentions toward Kuwait. Therefore, in several instances, King Hussein had told the leaders of Gulf countries that Iraq was just trying to show its muscles in order to acquire further concessions.

When King Hussein heard of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait from King Fahd, he was as shocked and staggered as every other leader in the region. His first reaction was to talk with Saddam Hussein about the invasion and to ask him to withdraw from the Kuwaiti territories. Immediately after his phone call to Saddam Hussein, King Hussein traveled to Alexandria to meet with Mubarak, and with Mubarak, called King Fahd and President George H.W. Bush and tried to develop a diplomatic

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64 According to George H.W. Bush, King Hussein repeatedly asserted that Saddam Hussein had no intention of using force against Kuwait. Considering the personal rapport between Saddam Hussein and King Hussein, US officials accepted King Hussein as a reliable source. He was extremely confident about his thoughts and because of that, for a long time, he couldn't convince the leaders of Gulf countries about his lack of information about Saddam Hussein's plans (Bush and Scowcroft, 1998).

65 After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the king of Saudi Arabia and Kuwaiti leaders became extremely suspicious about King Hussein's true intentions. For them, King Hussein might have the ulterior motives of sharing Kuwait's oil wealth with Iraq and of annex the holy lands of Saudi Arabia once ruled by King Hussein's great-grandfather. See Friedenber, Robert E. 2000. *The Throne at all Costs*.

action plan. However, King Hussein's endeavors to solve the dispute within Arab friends failed within three days.

After the failure to solve the dispute peacefully, King Hussein found himself at the center of an important foreign policy dilemma. In his country, both the Palestinian majority and the Bedouin minority were vigilant about his foreign policy decisions. On the one hand, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, including Kuwait, had been the most important sources of financial aid since the 1970s and the United States was the most significant source of military aid for the Jordanian army. During the last economic crisis in 1989, King Hussein had only been able to appease the rioters with the help of urgent funds from the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Iraq was the biggest trading partner for Jordanian exports and ever since King Hussein's support of Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq had been providing oil to Jordan far below its market value. He was aware that, regardless of his alignment choice, Jordan would face further economic problems and possible social instability as a result of this conflict. Although the political liberalization and parliamentary elections had brought a slight increase in the popularity of King Hussein, the domestic social and economic situation was still very volatile.

The Gulf Crisis and King Hussein's diplomatic maneuvers deflected the attention of the Jordanian public in the first days of the crisis. The political developments in a neighboring region and the invasion of an Arab country by another Arab country were already significant enough to distract the attention of the Jordanian public from domestic problems. The discussions on the streets of Jordan suddenly changed from economic problems to the Gulf Crisis and the invasion of Kuwait. Furthermore, Jordan's state-controlled media widely publicized King Hussein's meeting with Mubarak in Alexandria and his phone conferences with King Fahd and President George H.W. Bush about the crisis, which helped to increase King Hussein's stature among the Jordanian people.

In the first days of the crisis the Jordanian society did not react strongly to the developments and mostly followed King Hussein's statements on the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait. With the help of the media, in these first days of the crisis King Hussein achieved high esteem among the Jordanian people (Shulman, 2008). Especially, his endeavors for peaceful resolution of the conflict constituted an important source of his rising popularity. There were very limited resources for him to boost his popularity in domestic politics because of that he aimed to increase his popularity, which he needed desperately after the riots last year, through a more active pro-Iraqi foreign policy strategy. King Hussein gave the first signs of this policy in an interview in the first days of the crisis, when he openly praised Saddam Hussein and described him as "a person to be trusted and to be dealt with" and further said that he hoped that Saddam Hussein would be "given a chance to be known for what he is – an Arab patriot" (FBIS-NES-90-152, 7 August 1990).

In another interview, King Hussein answered a question regarding Saddam Hussein's personality by stating:

I believe he is a man who has gone through a very difficult experience, who has managed to hold his country together for eight years of war and beyond, who has built his country up, who believes in the Arab world, who seeks to serve it and who is recognized in his country as a patriot.....Iraq represented something new in the area; a strength of a people united, a strength of a people who has survived a terrible ordeal defending the Arab order, and that this represented a threat to some within the area and outside unfortunately (FBIS-NES 90-152, 7 August 1990).

Although King Hussein never accepted the legitimacy of Iraqi claims to Kuwaiti territories and he never recognized the annexation of Kuwait, he did not condemn Iraq for the invasion of Kuwait either. He also "did little to dissuade the public from its impression that he favored the Iraqi

annexation of Kuwaiti territories by force” (Shulman, 2008: 152). In addition, the government-controlled media in Jordan launched a simultaneous campaign to support Saddam Hussein. Considering the press law and the existence of strict censorship in Jordan, many observers believed that government’s tolerance of the media campaign implicitly showed the government’s endorsement of Iraq. According to Lynch (1999):

Some observers saw the press commentary as led directly by the regime “when al-Rai writes that the war in Iraq is a holy war...this is not evidence of a free press in Jordan giving vent to its unfettered views...it is an expression of the opinions prevailing today in the royal court.” (160)

Numerous editorials and articles were published in the government-owned or controlled newspapers during this period in support of Saddam Hussein and his policies (Bligh, 2002). Together with Saddam Hussein, the media was also portraying King Hussein and his diplomatic endeavors as heroic attempts to stop the foreign infiltration to the region. Although, King Hussein was responding to questions from the Western journalist regarding the increasing pro-Iraqi stand among the people of Jordan and the Jordanian media by saying that they are independent voices in Jordan, the observers of the Jordanian politics knew that under strict censorship nobody in Jordan would dare to write those things without a form of consent and approval of the Royal Court.

In addition to government-controlled media, civil society organizations, most of which were either controlled or strictly monitored by the government, also launched campaigns in support of the policies of King Hussein. Immediately after the invasion of Kuwait, the only support that Saddam Hussein had among the Jordanian groups was from pan-Arabist groups, such as the Nasserists and the Ba’athists which constituted a minority within the Jordanian society. They issued a statement calling on the Arab world to unite behind Saddam Hussein and his invasion was described as a first



step towards the establishment of Pan-Arab unity (Shulman, 2008: 161). Later, groups that were closely affiliated with and supported the Royal Court joined in the endorsement of Saddam Hussein. The most prominent of these groups was the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan.

The cordial relations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Royal Court based on mutual recognition were well-known in Jordan. The Brotherhood was the only group allowed to launch an open public election campaign during the parliamentary elections. According to analysts of Jordanian politics, such as Khabar, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan enjoyed official support and acquired the semblance of legal status. Of course, in return, the Brotherhood was extremely supportive of the policies of the Royal Court and endorsed the official Jordanian stance (1990). One of the most observable moments of this implicit cooperation between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Royal Court took place during the Gulf Crisis. In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, the Muslim Brotherhood refrained from making any statement about the invasion and the spokespersons of the Brotherhood did not express support or denunciation about the Iraqi action. In fact, the Brotherhood had always been skeptical about the ultra-secular Ba'ath government in Iraq and its relations with Saddam Hussein had never been excellent (Vandenberg, 2000: 194). As Mustafa Hamarneh captured succinctly, immediately after the invasion, only an individual Muslim Brotherhood member of Parliament made a statement about the invasion.

Mr Abdallah Akaileh, a Muslim brotherhood member of Parliament, reiterated his party's stand on Arab and Muslim unity, and hoped that differences between brothers would be solved through dialogue...as it was perceived the monarchy supported Iraq, the traditionally pro-Hashemite Muslim brotherhood party followed suit. (Hamarneh, 1992: 28)

However, after the government's tolerance of comments in Jordanian media and King Hussein's statements on Saddam Hussein, the Brotherhood chose to follow a more proactive strategy in support of Iraq. The Brotherhood's initial official statements on the crisis were in line with the policies and discourse of King Hussein. In its first statement, it declared that it wanted to see an Arab solution to the problem and appealed to the Kuwaiti and Saudi governments not to accept foreign troops to solve the problem (FBIS-NES 90- 15, 2 Aug 1990). Later, the tone of the Brotherhood's statements became more aggressive and the nature of its demands became more assertive, which really started to mobilize people of Jordan in support of the King Hussein and Saddam Hussein.

More importantly some members of the Jordanian government and Jordanian parliament started to express their support to Saddam Hussein without any limitations and did not face any sanctions as a result of these statements. For instance, against a religious fatwa by the Egyptian Mufti, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, allowing believers to use arms against the Iraqi leader, the Jordanian minister for religious affairs stated that the fatwa of Sayyid Tantawi was "wicked, erroneous and smacked of oil" and called "to expel the crusaders from the Arabian Peninsula" (Podeh, 1994). In addition a parliamentary delegation issues a communiqué stating that "any attack against Iraq would be considered an attack against the entire Islamic and Arab nation" (Podeh, 1994). King Hussein, who had the authority to dismiss any ministers and members of the parliament, did not take any action against these statements and did not voice any criticism.

Although these statements had a significant impact on the Jordanian people's perception of the crisis, the real mobilization began with the rallies organized by the Muslim Brotherhood. Following the riots of the previous year and the spread of the intifada in the West Bank, the Jordanian government adopted strict regulations regarding mass meetings. These regulations prohibited almost

any form of political gathering in the cities. However, only a few weeks after the invasion, the Muslim Brotherhood managed to stage huge demonstrations in every big city in the country. According to observers of Jordanian politics, there was definite government support and approval of these rallies, which were playing an important role in increasing the popularity of King Hussein. According to Lawrence Tal (1997):

When the Gulf crisis erupted, Hussein and his advisers were presented with an excellent opportunity to bolster their flagging legitimacy. For the first time in Jordanian history, the regime allowed, and even encouraged, anti- Western demonstrations to occur in public places. The Muslim Brotherhood was given a fairly free hand to channel popular dissent toward constructive ends; that is toward backing the king's policy of opposition to Western military intervention in the Gulf. Consequently, Hussein emerged from the crisis enjoying unprecedented popularity.

(121)

In a very short period of time, the Brotherhood transformed the mosques to the main bastions of the anti-Western and pro-Saddam demonstrations. On August 10, 1990, only ten days after the invasion of Kuwait, thousands of Jordanians gathered in the main mosques of Amman, burned the flags of the United States and Israel, and chanted slogans in favor of King Hussein and Saddam Hussein (FBIS-NES 90- 152, 7 Aug 1990). Even underground and illegal organizations, such as the Islamist Party of Jordan, were allowed to make public appearances and hold press conferences to support King Hussein's stance (FBIS- NES 90-159, 16 Aug 1990).

After the demonstrations of these Islamic groups, other civil society organizations also started to organize demonstrations and rallies. For example, university students, who had been kept under strict government control for decades, began to organize mass demonstrations. These rallies were

unprecedented in Jordan and every observer of Jordanian politics knew that such huge-scale demonstrations were inconceivable without the permission and endorsement of the state establishment. The demonstrating students carried pictures of King Hussein and Saddam Hussein and chanted slogans in support of Saddam Hussein (FBIS-NES 90-154, 9 Aug 1990). In addition to these demonstrations, various organizations were founded to support Saddam Hussein and help the Iraqi people, such as the Popular Jordanian Committee to Support Iraqi Arab People, which recruited 80,000 people within Jordan to fight alongside the Iraqi army should Iraq be attacked by the coalition forces (FBIS-NES 90-159, 16 Aug 1990). Also “charitable societies and labor unions collected food to send to Iraq while thousands chanted slogans in the Roman amphitheater in Amman, marched on the US and Iraqi embassies and rallied after Friday prayers. Such demonstrations would have been forbidden a year earlier, but in 1990 they were not only condoned but encouraged” (Lesch, 1991: 44). The Royal Court was content with the deflection of the public’s attention from domestic issues to the foreign policy realm and allowed the Jordanian people to exercise freedom of association and expression on foreign policy-related matters, as they had never done before.

The mobilization in support of Iraq diverted the attention of the Jordanian people from domestic economic problems and rallied them around the leadership of King Hussein. However, the society was still divided. Those who supported King Hussein’s foreign policy and attended the demonstrations were mostly the Jordanians. The Palestinians in Jordan, who constituted 60 percent of the population, were initially ambivalent and unwelcoming in their reaction to the invasion of Kuwait. Even after the Muslim Brotherhood began its mobilization efforts, the Palestinian groups were reluctant to react to the events like other Jordanians did. As Hannan Ashrawi mentioned, the Palestinian Authority stated the inadmissibility of territorial changes by force and demanded respect for the norm of self-determination (1991: 183). However, after Saddam Hussein’s statements on the

Palestinian issue and his initiation of the linkage politics, which suggested a simultaneous withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon, Israel from the occupied territories in Palestine, and Iraq from Kuwait, the Palestinians in Jordan started to show increasing interest to the Gulf War and King Hussein's foreign policy towards Iraq. Until then, they were mostly preoccupied with the ongoing intifada in the West Bank and increasing Jewish migration and settlements in the Occupied Territories..

Until the Gulf Crisis, the Palestinians in Jordan lacked any form of loyalty to King Hussein and the Hashemite Dynasty. Many Palestinians, particularly the ones who had lived in refugee camps for decades, remembered Black September and King Hussein's betrayal of the Palestinian leadership in various instances, including his last unilateral disengagement from the West Bank. King Hussein had always been concerned about the political mobilization of these groups and the possible threats that these groups posed to the regime. Saddam Hussein's linkage policy initiated the mobilization of some of these groups in support of Saddam Hussein and inspired King Hussein to try to "win" the hearts and minds of the Palestinian majority in his country. In a very short period of time, his foreign policy had provided him with unprecedented support among Jordanians and he believed that the continuation of this policy might help him to win over the Palestinian people as well. Moreover, Hussein believed that the tension between Jordanians and Palestinians, which had intensified after the economic crisis in 1989, could be contained through a foreign policy discourse that could unify these groups. During the crisis, he attended the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians, met with his Palestinian opponents, began to implement his own version of Saddam Hussein linkage policy, and stated his support of Saddam Hussein on this subject.

However, while taking these actions, King Hussein was also secretly meeting with Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir, and giving various guarantees about Jordan's stance. In addition to this, while expressing his grave concerns over the massing of foreign troops to Saudi

Arabia, he also avoided direct criticism or condemnation of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for their willingness to host this overwhelmingly Western coalition (Brand, 1991). Moreover in response to the concerns from the Western governments on his increasing support for Saddam Hussein, King Hussein told the Western diplomats that there is a distinction between his public support for Saddam Hussein for domestic reasons and his real, covert pro-Western position, which basically had not changed (Bligh, 2002).

With King Hussein's pro-linkage politics, which was in line with the Palestinian demands, for the first time since their emigration, Palestinian groups felt allegiance to the Hashemite Monarchy. In fact, as Hamarneh (1992) stated:

For decades, the majority of Palestinians were under the impression that the Hashemite policies concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict were in collusion with the Zionist. The King's stand during the crisis has been the most important factor in contributing to better relations between the two communities. The King's popularity reached unprecedented levels. Although he always enjoyed a high level of popular support among the Jordanian majority, during the crisis he made sizeable inroads among the Palestinian portion of the population. This led to a considerable lessening of tensions between the two segments of the population (238).

The demonstrations in Jordan spread to different segments and classes of the Jordanian society (Azzam, 1991: 476). The support of King Hussein took the form of rallies, marches, and demonstrations, "including a march of ten thousand people in Madaba on August 12, a fifteen thousand strong demonstration in Mafraq the same day, a rally of twenty five thousand in Zarqa on August 25, and a massive pro-Saddam demonstration attended by seventy thousand Jordanians on September 10 in Amman" (Vandenberg, 2000: 191). Although the government's unprecedented

lenience towards anti-Western demonstrations and the King's unwillingness to condemn Iraq incurred the wrath of the Western powers, in the King's view, such popularity in the midst of a financial and social crisis was worth paying a heavy price (Baram, 1991: 68).

At the rallies, demonstrators from different walks of life glorified the very symbols of the Hashemite Monarchy that they had torn down the previous year. Palestinians waved the flag of Jordan together with the flags of Iraq and Palestine. Demonstrators in Amman carried posters of King Hussein together with pictures of Saddam Hussein. The domestic public opinion became one that did not oppose the government, even after the devastating effects of sanctions on the Jordanian economy.<sup>66</sup> The society was unified and there was no wedge between Palestinians and Jordanians. Both camps were ready to make any kind of sacrifice for King Hussein and for Saddam Hussein. King Hussein continued this policy until the end of the war, which helped him to have the public's support while an intifada, which might have a spillover effect on Jordanian society, was being waged to the west of Jordan and a war whose economic consequences might endanger the future of the Hashemite Monarchy was being waged to the east of Jordan. His use of foreign policy helped him to secure his throne and regime during these crises.

While playing this card domestically, King Hussein also tried to maintain warm relations with the Western countries by paying visits to Western capitals to explain his viewpoints. According to Alexander Bligh, King Hussein was trying to play to multiple audiences at the same time with contradictory messages:

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<sup>66</sup> According to Shulman, the sanctions brought pressures to three different fields of Jordanian economy : "1-) transit trade through the port of Aqba , from which approximately 70 percent of imports and 25 percent of the exports en route to Iraq; 2-) industrial exports, with some 75 percent of Jordan's industrial output bound for Iraq; and 3-) oil imports, 80-90 percent of which Jordan received free of charge from Iraq in payment of the large debt to Jordan that Iraq had accumulated during the Iran-Iraq war"(2008; 170).

On the domestic scene , it was a conscious attempt to cater to the public feeling of sympathy with that new symbol of Arab solidarity, Saddam Hussein; on the foreign diplomatic and media scene in short, the Western field, it was a clear effort to convince his audience that he did not really mean to harm Western interests or to deviate from his traditional pro-Western policies; thirdly while allowing his people to publicly attack Israel he continued his secret dialogue with its leaders- a complicated game of global, regional and local interests which eventually in spite of the temporary setback after the war, paid off and not only guaranteed once more the preservation of the regime, but as early as the spring of 1991 made Jordan pivotal power in the US approach to the peace process, a position unequalled at any time before the war (2002: 184).

In the midst of coalition attacks against Iraq, King Hussein made several appearances on Jordanian television and expressed his support of Iraq. However, his advisors met with the political officers of the US embassy in Amman immediately after the speeches and assured them that the speeches were intended for domestic consumption (Shalim, 2008). Observers, especially those in Israel, also knew that the speeches were intended to create a rally effect domestically. As a result, immediately after the war, Israel's prime minister asked Secretary of State James Baker and other US officials with whom he met to include Jordan in the peace process, which consequently, the US did (Baker, 1995: 423).

Some alternative explanations have been provided to explain the foreign policy decision making of King Hussein of Jordan during the Gulf Crisis. Some asserted that the alignment of Jordan with Iraq during the crisis was due to an attempt, on the part of King Hussein, to balance the threat of Israel by the help of Iraq. However people like James Baker argued that King Hussein was already in the process of negotiating secretly with the leaders of Israel before the war (1995). In addition, just



before the war, the Israeli foreign secretary David Levy publicly reassured Jordan that Israel had no hostile intentions against Jordan or the regime of King Hussein (Cited in Lynch, 1998: 358). After the invasion of Kuwait, King Hussein met several times with Israel's premier and negotiated a deal of non-aggression during these meetings. As part of this agreement, King Hussein asked the Iraqi leader not to use the airspace of Jordan to attack any third party and made clear that in case of an Iraqi breach of Jordanian airspace, Jordan would use its air defense system.

The second alternative explanation is related to economic interests. According to this explanation, King Hussein acted in favor of Iraq in the Gulf Crisis because of strong economic ties between Jordan and Iraq. Scholars like Stanley Reed asserted that King Hussein preferred to take a pro-Iraqi stand during the Gulf Crisis because of Jordan's fragile economy during the Gulf Crisis. He argued that, when the invasion took place, Iraq was Jordan's biggest trading partner and Iraq was selling oil to Jordan with a lower market price (Reed, 1990). However, despite this close economic relations, Iraq was not biggest economic financier of the Jordanian economy. The financial assistance from the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia constituted an important portion of the Jordanian economy. The direct contributions to the Jordanian budget from these countries were very critical to provide the continuation of public services in Jordan. In addition, the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia were the most important destinations for unemployed Jordanians, which alleviated the unemployment problem in Jordan. Moreover, the remittances from the Jordanian workers in these countries to their families back in Jordan constituted an important portion of the Jordanian economy. In addition to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Jordanian economy relied heavily upon financial and military assistance from the United States and international organizations. The United States in particular had been the major source of military aid for Jordan. This shows that Jordan had more significant economic relations with the Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia than Iraq and thus the economic interest cannot explain the foreign policy behavior of King Hussein. Moreover, the Gulf countries and the United

States were generous in rewarding those countries that join the international coalition and compensated economic losses of oil-poor countries. So if Jordan joined international coalition, it would also enjoy the economic resources from these countries.

Finally, some others argue that King Hussein acted the way he did because of the fear of public reaction. For scholars like Brand, it was public opinion that forced King Hussein to act in support of Saddam Hussein; because the society in Jordan was attracted to the pan-Arabist messages of Saddam Hussein (Brand, 1994). This argument was also refuted by scholars such as Lynch, who argued that there was not any unified and pre-existing position about the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Most of public opinion was shaped by the Jordanian media, which was under the control of King Hussein at that period. The strict censorship at that period wouldn't allow let the expression of opinions of different groups independently (Lynch, 1998: 366).

### **LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THE SELECTION OF DIVERSIONARY STRATEGIES**

The analysis of King Hussein's leadership style during the Gulf Crisis demonstrates how certain leadership traits can account for the diversionary decision making of political leaders. According to this analysis, King Hussein was a leader who decided to respect constraints depending on the context. He was also a leader with high self-confidence and low conceptual complexity, which made him close to outside information and contextual cues. Furthermore, he showed the qualities of a leader with interpersonal emphasis. Finally according to Hussein cooperation was not only possible but also feasible in world politics.

Under strong domestic economic and societal pressures, King Hussein preferred to respect the constraints of domestic groups. Throughout the crisis, he neither antagonized Western forces nor

overtly supported Iraqi forces. He respected the societal pressure to support Iraqi leader in his actions but also respected international demands by not recognizing the annexation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces. Among the different domestic constraints he was particularly considerate to the demands of the Palestinian groups. He tried not to antagonize the Palestinian groups, especially after the announcement of the linkage politics by Saddam Hussein, and tried to be considerate of their demands as well.

The second common leadership trait for leaders that use diversionary strategies is the relationship focus and King Hussein's score on "relationship focus" also shows that he is more focused on relationships than on tasks. Like other leaders with a relationship emphasis, he was particularly sensitive toward the maintenance and establishment of relationships with his constituents. In the midst of an economic and social crisis and an international conflict, he tried very hard to maintain the loyalty and allegiance of his constituents. King Hussein's focus on relationship shows that both democratic and authoritarian leaders take into account the opinions of the domestic public and want to maintain the support of their people. In Jordan, during the Gulf Crisis the elected parliament had no influence on the country's foreign policy making. The executive branch could be ousted by King Hussein when he deemed it necessary. The law placed restrictions on press freedom and the King had absolute authority over all forms of foreign and security policy decision making. Moreover, the most powerful and organized social group in Jordan – the Muslim Brotherhood - had absolute loyalty to King Hussein and the Hashemite monarchy. However, even under these circumstances, King Hussein was worried about public opinion among the Jordanian masses and was playing the foreign policy card in order to win domestic legitimacy.

As for many Arab leaders, one way to solve the question of domestic legitimacy and to ensure the support of the society was to engage in a foreign policy venture. Numerous Middle Eastern leaders

employed the strategy of manipulating a foreign policy- related event in order to regain their legitimacy and standing. Throughout the Gulf Crisis, Hussein aimed to unite the people of Jordan, who were divided by ethnic, religious and sectarian lines, under his flag through diplomatic maneuvers. He actually succeeded in mobilizing the Palestinians to carry the Jordanian flag and hold up his picture when only a year earlier, they had burned symbols of the Hashemite Monarchy. He pursued this strategy despite its international side effects. In terms of domestic legitimacy and strength, he was the only winner during the Gulf Crisis.

The more interesting scores of the leadership trait analysis of King Hussein were his “openness to information” and his “motivation towards the world.” According to the leadership trait analysis, King Hussein was close to information during the Gulf Crisis. His high “self-confidence” scores show that he thought that he knew what was right and what should be done regarding his foreign policy making and that he tried to persuade others about the appropriateness of his courses of action. He was fairly unresponsive and insensitive to incoming information from his advisors and aides. Observers of Jordanian politics argued that from the very beginning of the crisis, King Hussein did not take into consideration contextual cues. After Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, he also ignored the opinions of his two closest advisors Adnan Abu Obdeh and Zaid bin Shaker. Moreover, in the same period, he even ignored the suggestions of his own brother Prince Hassan, who was the closest person to King Hussein during his reign. According to Shlaim (2008):

One of the very few flaming rows between the two brothers was on the subject of Saddam. Hassan warned Hussein repeatedly that Saddam was an incorrigible and dangerous despot, but Hussein would not listen (493).

Leaders like King Hussein, who are close to contextual information, are more likely to depend on their instincts in their selection of diversionary mechanisms and these instincts are shaped by their

former political experience. In most instances, they choose to trust their intuition and believe that they know how to handle issues better than anybody else. It is fairly easy for them to reach decisions. They believe that the most secure and reliable method is to exercise consistency in diversionary action. If a leader in this category has employed scapegoating in the past in his career, he is going to continue to utilize the same mechanism again and if he has used peaceful methods of diversion in the past, he will pursue this strategy in other domestic crises that he faces. During the Gulf Crisis, King Hussein repeated the same diversionary strategies that he had previously employed in his career in order to divert the attention of the domestic public and unify and rally the society around his flag.

Prior to the Gulf Crisis, King Hussein had frequently resorted to diversionary peacemaking when confronted with domestic problems and when his rule started to be challenged by opposition groups. An early example of his use of this strategy took place after his controversial marriage to Antoinette Avril Gardiner in 1961. After divorcing his first wife, King Hussein decided to marry Gardiner, who was an award-winning field hockey player and the daughter of a British army officer turned innkeeper. His decision was opposed not only by the members of the royal family but also by his close advisors and loyal politicians on the ground of rising anti-British sentiments within Jordanian society. Even Henniker-Major, the British ambassador to Jordan met with King Hussein and tried to dissuade him from this marriage considering the damage that it could cause to his prestige and legitimacy in Jordan (Shlaim, 2008: 183). After King Hussein married Gardiner, he was confronted with criticism from various segments of the society. His reputation had already been damaged by his resistance to joining the United Arab Republic and his willingness to be part of the Baghdad Pact. Radio Cairo, which was the most important pan-Arabist propaganda tool of Egyptian President Nasser, started a campaign against King Hussein regarding his marriage to a British woman. This campaign was later complemented by protests on the streets of Amman against the

pro-British foreign policy stand of King Hussein. Amid all these domestic criticisms, King Hussein launched a foreign policy process of repairing relations with his Arab neighbors. His visits to Baghdad and Cairo were interpreted by observers of Jordanian politics as using foreign policy for domestic purposes. Scholars like Ashton interpreted Hussein's sudden turn to the Arab world as an attempt "to forestall criticisms of his potentially controversial marriage" (2008: 85).

This was not the only example of King Hussein resorting to diversionary peacemaking before the Gulf Crisis. He did it again in 1967 when his credibility and popularity were declining rapidly due to the rise of Arab nationalism in Jordan. At the same time, the division between Jordanians and Palestinians was threatening the unity and integrity of the country. The smear campaign against King Hussein from Cairo was making his job more difficult. According to foreign observers, King was facing an imminent danger to his rule. "How far he would be able to hold the country together and rely on the support of the army in these circumstances was a moot point. There were many imponderables in both courses of action, and either way, the King's domestic political authority seemed likely to be challenged" (Ashton, 2008: 114). Under these difficult domestic circumstances, King Hussein decided one more time to approach Nasser's Egypt. By signing the defense pact with Egypt, King Hussein gained the support of various segments of the Jordanian society. Those who had criticized him for being a British puppet rallied around him after signing of this agreement. As Shlaim observed "on his return home later in the day, Hussein basked in the glory of his friendship with Nasser. Jubilant crowds lined the streets as the royal procession drove to the hilltop palace" (2008: 240).

The final part of King Hussein's leadership style was his motivation towards the world. As mentioned above, for King Hussein, the world was not a zero-sum place and his outlook towards the world was not conflict-prone. For him, conflicts were context-specific and he preferred to deal

with them on a case-by-case basis. He thought that cooperation was possible and feasible among different states. His worldview and attitude toward foreign policy informed his way of using diversionary strategies. Since he thought that cooperation is always achievable among countries, when looking for a foreign policy event to distract public attention, he was more inclined to choose peaceful strategies. Throughout the Gulf Crisis and domestic crises that he experienced in his career, he usually opted to use peaceful strategies, such as summits with Arab leaders or alignment with Arab countries.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **HAFIZ AL-ASSAD AND THE USE OF MULTIPLE FORMS OF DIVERSIONS**

#### **Introduction**

Hafiz Assad of Syria was one of the most influential personalities of Middle Eastern politics. During his presidency, he was not only the single most powerful leader of Syria but also an effective player in the regional conflict and cooperation in the Middle East. Unlike his counterparts in Jordan and Iraq, for most of his thirty-year rule he lived a private life, did not make a lot of public appearances and rarely gave interviews. He was known to be a workaholic and extremely self-disciplined. Western leaders who met him during their tenure, such as former President Clinton and former Secretary of State Kissinger, called him one of the most intelligent and shrewd policy makers in Middle Eastern politics.

He played a significant role in each and every important crisis in the Middle East, including the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Lebanon Conflict, and Iran-Iraq War. During the Gulf Crisis, Assad again became a key player in regional politics and his decisions impacted the nature and the outcome of the conflict. His support of the coalition forces against Saddam Hussein's Iraq provided symbolic power and legitimacy to the war efforts of the United States and was instrumental in the reintegration of Syria into the Arab regional order and world politics. Although his personal animosity towards Saddam Hussein constituted an important part of his foreign policy decision



making during the crisis, he employed a well-articulated strategy during his negotiations with leaders of Western and Gulf countries and he was given important economic and political rewards for his support. Moreover, with the acquiescence of the Western governments and regional actors, he was able to strengthen the status of Syria in Lebanon.

However, in addition to these rewards, Assad had to incur significant economic and political costs as a result of his foreign policy decisions during and after the Gulf Crisis. First of all, in the aftermath of the crisis Assad faced significant economic problems as a result of increasing unemployment and rising inflation. In addition, with the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, the financial assistance from these countries stopped abruptly. Although, he received a significant amount of financial assistance from the Gulf countries after the Gulf War, he spent most of this assistance in order to acquire new weaponry to deter his enemies, after seeing the military supremacy of Western countries in the Gulf War. This led to a steep increase in the defense budget and a decrease in social service spending. Syrian people started to raise their voices against the economic policies of the government. Especially labor unions increasingly expressed their grievances about the economic condition of workers to the government. Secondly, the first months of 1990 witnessed the end of the Cold War and the fall of the regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. These developments were particularly significant to Assad whose regime had been supported both financially and militarily by the brethren communist governments of these countries for decades. Moreover, the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe and the rise of popular movements that overthrew authoritarian regimes constituted major threats to the survival of Assad's regime in Syria.

Amid all these difficulties, Assad began playing a foreign policy card to deflect the attention of the Syrian public from domestic problems. While doing this, he employed multiple strategies including

escalating tension with Israel and endorsing the US-led peace process. Assad achieved a change in the debates in his country from economic problems, such as rising unemployment, to negotiations and the peace process with Israel, particularly with the help of state-controlled media. However, when he saw that the temporary rallying effect of peace negotiations was almost over and that the people of Syria were again beginning to raise their voices against the regime due to the recurrent problems, he shifted his discourse and began to attack Israel verbally in speeches and public messages and fed the nationalist feelings of his people.

### **DECISION CONTEXT**

There were important domestic challenges to Assad's rule in the last days of 1980s, including an ailing economy and growing social instability (Huber, 1992: 55). Moreover, changes in the international system and its repercussions for Syria were not helping the Assad regime either. The changes in Eastern and Central Europe and the fall of the Soviet Union affected politics and the economy in Syria. With the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein in 1990, Assad faced another major challenge. Throughout the 1980s, Assad had supported Iran in its war against Iraq and had been the archenemy of Saddam Hussein's regime. He had also been isolated from the Arab regional order because of this support. After the international reaction to the invasion and the deployment of American soldiers to the Gulf region, Assad rushed to bandwagon with the American-led international coalition despite the opposition of Arab and Syrian masses. Although Assad's regime was one of the most significant beneficiaries of the Gulf War in terms of economic and financial aid, it also faced a great deal of adverse effects from pursuing this foreign policy.

The most important problem that the Assad regime was confronting in the first months of the 1990s related to the changes in the international system. The fall of the authoritarian regimes of Central and Eastern Europe, which had been natural allies and trade partners of Syria for decades,

was a huge blow to the Assad regime. The wave of democratization and political openness in these countries was a major source of concern for the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East. Middle Eastern leaders were particularly worried about a possible domino effect that could destroy their rule. The fall of the communist regime in Romania and the execution of the toppled president Ceausescu and his wife particularly traumatized Hafiz Assad. The rise of similar mass movements could overthrow the regime in Syria and endanger his life and his family. Despite the high level of censorship and surveillance, the walls of Damascus began to be filled with graffiti that said “Assadcescu” or “every Ceausescu has his day” (Zisser, 2001: 48). In an editorial in *Al Hayat* of London during this time, Hafiz Assad was compared to Ceausescu and was called an “Arab Ceausescu” (Pipes, 1991: 14). In addition, during these days he was feeling societal pressure from different segments of Syrian society, including new business class, who wanted to transform its economic power to a political one and the Sunni majority, whose members were asking for greater political inclusion (Robinson, 1998: 170). In order to stop a possible public reaction against his regime, Assad first tried to use his censorship mechanisms to stop dissemination of information about the incidents in Eastern Europe. Later, he made some important public appearances and underlined the differences between Romania and Syria and stressed that he would not share the same fate as Ceausescu of Romania.

Thus, in a direct response to upheavals in Eastern Europe, Assad...stressed that Syria would not copy, and had never copied in the past, the examples of other countries. Changes in Eastern Europe were not going to compel Syria to alter its system, in as much as Syria had been ahead of these countries, implementing a multi-party system and a mixed economy as early as 20 years previously. Freedom, Assad said, would have to be organized...(Bahout, 1994: 65)

He also took some extra precautions, such as increasing surveillance and monitoring of political groups, in his well-controlled country in order to make sure that something of this magnitude would not take place within Syrian territories.

The regime changes and people's movements in Central and Eastern Europe also brought some important changes in the relationships of these countries with Syria. For decades, many of these countries' foreign policies had been shaped by the principles and doctrines of the Warsaw Pact. In most of these countries' relations with Syria, they had followed a common foreign policy and had become natural allies of Syria. The members of the Warsaw Pact had particularly endorsed the position and policies of the Syrian government in Syria's confrontation with Israel. As a result, Syria had received a huge amount of armaments and financial and technical aid from these countries. In fact, during most of the Cold War, the Soviet Union had been "the primary source of political, military, and economic assistance and support for the Syrians, and she had provided strategic backing in the face of possible Israeli or US attack on Syria" (Zisser, 2001: 45). The communist regimes in these countries had refused to extend and improve diplomatic relations with the state of Israel. After regime changes in these countries, the new leaders not only renounced "ties with the friends of old regime, but .... they were also waiting in line to renew relations with Israel." Moreover, "adding insult to injury, new governments in Central Europe have atoned for past sins by turning confidential files over to Israel intelligence" (Pipes, 1991: 14). These changes constituted important strategic, political, and economic losses for the Syrian government. As Pipes mentioned, Assad stated several times that the biggest loser of the change in the international system were Syria and himself. In fact, a high ranking official in an interview pronounced that Syrians and the loyalists of the Assad regime regretted the fall of Soviet Union more than Russians or any other people living in communist countries (Pipes, 1996: 8).

In addition to disadvantaging Syria strategically and economically, the fall of Soviet Union brought other important problems for Syria, such as the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel. This was an extremely sensitive issue considering the demographic equilibrium in the region. The migration, which began with family reunifications, accelerated in a very short period of time. For Assad, this migration constituted an existential problem for the future of the Arab world. In a speech on the new regional order, Assad stated:

Let us look at the intensive Jewish immigration to the land of Palestine...All support it and praise it under the slogan of man's freedom to migrate, and in the name of the right of the Jew to return to his homeland- the promised land, the land of Israel that God promised them according to their holy books. However, let us ask ourselves: in the name of what freedom of immigration are they speaking? Does no one see that the word freedom in practice means aggression? For the freedom to immigrate is in practice (in the case before us) the freedom to conquer another's land and evict him from his home. The Jewish immigrant does not come in search of work or a place to live, he believes he is returning to the land of his forefathers given to him by God...He returns to it in order to fight the Arabs, since Palestine is part of the Arab homeland. Thus the freedom of man to migrate from place to place becomes a false slogan, for its meaning is in fact the right to conquer another's land and evict the other from his home and from his land. (Cited in Zisser, 2001: 46-47)

The migration of Jews to the Israeli territories not only brought a demographic advantage to Israel vis-à-vis Palestinians in the occupied territories, but it also had the potential of resulting in more Israeli settlements in the Golan Heights, which would help the consolidation of Israeli rule in these territories. But more importantly, it might bring more refugees to Syria. The Palestinian refugees had

a destabilizing effect in their host countries in the Middle East, due to their militancy and reluctance to abide the rules of their host states. This might destabilize the Syrian government.

The Gulf Crisis took place amid these difficult circumstances in Syria. The rapid international reaction and the Saudi government's permission of the deployment of American soldiers to Saudi territories in order to deter Iraqi aggression left Syria in a dilemma. In this situation, Assad made a bold decision, and despite negative domestic repercussions, Syria joined the international coalition against Iraq. At the very beginning of the crisis, the Syrian government condemned Baghdad's action and the Syrian Foreign Ministry released a statement calling for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from the territories of Kuwait. After calling an Arab summit, Syria voted in favor of a resolution condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and asking for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal. Later, Syria also voted in favor of the deployment of Arab forces to protect Saudi Arabia (Shulman, 2008: 193). In order to curb any possible anti-government demonstrations due to this decision, the Syrian regime made attempts to explain the reasons for its decision. According to Huber (1992), "Assad directed party leaders to dispatch teams throughout the country to emphasize certain points to the Syrian people. These points were: Syria- not Iraq- is the custodian of the pan-Arab ideal; Syria had deployed troops to the Saudi peninsula so that the crisis would not be exclusively in the hands of foreigners; the Syrians were not there to fight Iraq- the troop movement was strictly defensive." (93)

The government in Syria also started a censorship campaign to prevent the influence of the Baghdad-based propaganda campaign from influencing the hearts and minds of Syrians. It also prohibited any pro-Iraq or anti-government demonstrations and political campaigns that might spread among the majority Sunni people in Syria. However, a few days after the Syrian decision to join international coalition, the Syrian public had the opportunity to acquire information from

different sources and began to question the decision of the Syrian government. According to Huber (1992):

Syrians were outspoken in their opposition to the deployment of Syrian army to the Saudi Peninsula. Many Syrians reacted with hostility, and in some cases violence, to the idea of Syrian troops serving alongside American troops. According to one Syrian: 'We are not ready to defend American interest in the Gulf. I would rather die with honor fighting on the side of one Arab leader who dares challenge the United States.' (90)

In Damascus and other Sunni-dominated cities including Homs and Hama, graffiti and posters appeared praising Saddam Hussein and his courage to stand up against the Western coalition. Western sources also reported that there were mass uprisings and violent pro-Iraqi protests in Al-Hasakah and Dair al-Zor in late August. In addition, the Palestinian refugee camps witnessed massive protests in support of Saddam Hussein (Raymond, 1991: 75-76, 78). Furthermore, the Islamic opposition against the Assad regime, in particular, became more vocal in its criticisms of Syrian foreign policy. For instance, the Muslim Brotherhood, which was suppressed in Syria in early 1980s, issued a statement calling for the overthrow of the Assad regime because of its plot against Iraq and its siding with the enemies of Iraq and the Arab people. The statement said that there were two sides in the war: the traitors who stood beside the Zionist entity and the United States of America, chief among whom was Hafiz Assad; and those who supported struggling Iraq and were in solidarity with Muslim and Arab fighters (FBIS-NES-90-015, 23 Jan 1991). Following this, the Islamic Jihad also issued a statement against Assad's support of the international coalition, as well as his domestic politics. The statement was full of accusations and criticisms of Assad's course of action and expressed support for Saddam Hussein's regime. It was stated that "heroic leader Saddam

Husayn has woken the sleepy, moved the indifferent , and revived hopes in the hearts of the nation after a long period of silence” (FBIS-NES-90-016, 24 Jan 1991). The statement also promised support for Saddam Hussein:

We all stand behind his Excellency’s wise leadership with all of our energies, and the Syrian people will never forget their brothers even though their leaders have abandoned the right course (ibid).

Later, the more secular opposition groups also began to raise their voices against Syrian support of the international coalition. Democratic National Groupings of Syria, which was comprised of a number of Syrian opposition parties, issued a statement in Damascus demanding that the Syrian government withdraw Syrian troops from the Gulf. The statement also expressed full support for Iraq in its steadfastness against the international coalition (FBIS-NES-91-019, 29 Jan 1991).

Moreover, although denied vigorously by the Assad regime, there were several pro-Iraqi demonstrations in different regions of Syria, including Day-al Zur, Qamishli, and other cities in northeastern Syria close to the Iraqi borders. There were also several demonstrations in Palestinian refugee camps and in the universities of Damascus. Furthermore, as reported by Salloukh, “popular discontent with the regime’s alignment policy was also voiced through graffiti, leaflets and in conversations with foreign correspondents. ....[m]any Syrians listened openly to Baghdad’s radio station and expressed sympathy for Saddam and displeasure with their own government’s policy” (2000, 444) .

Despite economic and diplomatic gains for Hafiz Assad, the end of the war also brought some negative political consequences for the Syrian regime. As stated above, the Syrian government lost public support in the aftermath of the war because of the negative consequences of the war for Syria. In addition, during the war and in its aftermath, the Syrian government continued to struggle



with an ailing economy. Although like many Middle Eastern states, the Syrian economy enjoyed rapid development in the 1970s, mostly due to the oil boom, Syria lost a great deal of this income during the 1980s. The decline in oil prices and the decreasing level of financial aid, due to Syria's isolation from the Arab world, resulted in an increasing budget deficit and unemployment.<sup>67</sup> The country's foreign exchange reserve also dwindled in late 1980s and the external debt was estimated around 5 billion dollars, not including that owed to the Soviet Union for military support, which was estimated to be around 15 billion dollars (Meyer, 1994). The studies and the reports on the Syrian economy indicated major weaknesses in the economy and pointed out the Syrian government's practice of ignoring the structural problems inherent in the economy.<sup>68</sup> One of the scholars on the Syrian economy described the impact of the government on the economic conditions in Syria by stating, "The country has no fiscal or monetary policies: economic plans and the national budget are almost wholly notional" (Jansen, 1988 Cited in Meyer, 1994). This lack of planning also caused problems in the new projects that the Syrian government initiated. Most of these plans did not fit with the structure of the Syrian economy. Perthes (1992) in his analysis asserted:

The new projects were capital intensive and needed a comparatively small but well-trained labor force, and were highly dependent on imported raw materials, semi finished products, and spare parts. Deficiencies...meant that production fell short of the projects' capabilities and the resulting products were of poor quality and largely unsuitable for competition in foreign markets. (45)

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<sup>67</sup> The total amount of contributions from Arab neighbors was 1.819 billion dollars in 1981 and it fell to the level of 1.061 billion dollars in 1985 (Meyer, 1994).

<sup>68</sup> See. Syria: A Country Study, 1988. Washington DC, United States Government and EIU Syria Country Profile 1989-1990.

The reform and liberalization laws of the late 1980s were not very successful. According to Robinson the main reason of this failure was the lack of any major change in the handling of Syrian economy. For instance, there was no major personnel change in the regime or bureaucratic reform to push the liberalization. Those ministers and bureaucrats who did support reform have been unable to implement needed measures (Robinson, 1998: 165).

In 1991, because of Syria's participation in the international coalition against Iraq, Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, extended 2 billion dollars to Syria in financial aid and Western countries declared their readiness to extend credit and technical help to the Syrian economy. However, most of this assistance failed to bring any good to the lives of ordinary Syrians, and was instead transferred to the defense budget. Assad felt the necessity to strengthen his own military against possible Israeli aggression, especially after seeing the military technology of Western countries during the Gulf War. He focused on building effective defense strategies that could stop or slow down the Israeli military in a possible attack and acquiring better weaponry and more long- range missiles for the Syrian army. In fact, although Syria recovered from political isolation and gained economic aid after the war, it did not help the Assad regime to recover from domestic economic and social problems. When the war ended, Syria's economy continued to suffer from the same economic and financial problems that it had faced earlier. In 1991, an observer of the Syrian economy described the situation as follows:

Syria is slipping into economic decrepitude...Any visitor to Damascus can testify to the visibly worsening economic situation. (The Middle East, September 1991, 20)

The inflation in Syria was still over 50 percent a year. This constant high inflation together with the cuts in public spending lowered the living standards of the Syrian people. Even the developmental investments, such as investments in power generation and water, were suspended (Hawwa, 1993: 95).

Unemployment was also increasing during this period, due to the lack of job opportunities, return of Syrian workers from the Gulf countries and high population growth. In addition, there was over-centralization and a high level of corruption in the Syrian economy. In fact, as stated by Zisser (2001),

the regime's efforts were insufficient to overcome the growing backwardness resulting from years of neglect, the lack of technological infrastructure, and the shortage of skilled and professional manpower. Moreover the progress achieved fell short of meeting the rise in demand for these services because of the rapid population growth. Infrastructural problems of water and electricity supply, transport and communications thus continued to preoccupy the regime in Damascus and draw sharp public criticism. (190)

In the first months of 1990, the shortage of foreign exchange also became an important problem for Syrian economy. The government started to ration its foreign exchange reserves to those enterprises most likely to generate export earnings (Lawson, 1994: 49). According to Pipes (1991):

These problems create a vicious circle: a shortage of foreign exchange leads to missing spare parts, and this in turn leads to factories working at a fraction of capacity, the effect, of course, in less foreign exchange. Foreign currency reserves have at times been down to a mere 20 days' worth. Such ordinary items as toilet paper are missing for long stretches of time. (11)

The public sector was hit particularly hard by these shortages and economic shortcomings. In 1990, the Damascus Workers' Annual Conference prepared a report about the Syrian economy and raised some red flags. According to this report, it was clear that within a short period of time, it would be impossible to renovate, renew, or develop the public sector's establishments. The public sector's

production capacity was paralyzed because of the scarcity of production requirements, such as raw materials and equipment. This also increased the costs of maintenance in the public sector's establishments and made them extremely unproductive (FBIS-NES-90-079, 24 April 1990).

The social reflection of the economic problems was threatening stability in Syria. For instance, the widespread shortages in various sectors of the economy made it difficult for the central government to close the quality-of-life gaps among the segments in society. The economic liberalization reforms of the late 1980s had already created a new upper class in Syrian society, as well as a massive group of have-nots. A possible conflict between these classes could cause marginalization of the members of lower classes, which could in turn, result in strong anti-regime movements around politically organized groups (Polling, 1994: 25). In addition, most of the losers of new economic reforms were the social groups that had defended the regime for decades now. In fact, according to Zisser (1990), "These left behind belong to precisely those sectors of the population which in the past had been the main bastions of support for the regime: the lower social classes, workers, peasants, residents of rural areas and the periphery and finally the government and party bureaucracy." (193-194)

During this time, in the political sphere, the left-wing Ba'athists and Communist deputies were extremely critical about the structure of the budget and the increasing income gap between the rich and poor sectors of the Syrian society. The federations of workers and farm laborers also stated their opposition to planned reductions in social welfare spending and subsidies to private enterprises (Lawson, 1994: 60). The General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) of Syria was among the most vocal organizations during this period. In its congress, it compiled a lengthy list of grievances about the adverse effects of the economic policies in Syria. According to GFTU, since the inception of the reform programs in the economy:

Skilled industrial workers were deserting the public sector in growing numbers to take higher paying jobs in private manufacturing companies; price increases on staples continued to outpace wage increases for government employees; private schools and hospitals had become clearly better-equipped and better administered than those operated by the state; and the gap between the ostentatious rich and struggling poor appeared to be widening at an alarming rate.....The potential for widespread worker disaffection continued to escalate.....as the managers of public sector industrial enterprise began laying off more experienced, higher paid employees and replacing them with younger laborers in an effort to cut production costs (Lawson, 1994; 60).

In sum, although the economic reforms of late 1980s and the financial incentives of joining the international coalition against Iraq had bought the Assad regime some breathing space, the regime continued to experience problems pertaining to the structural deficiencies in the Syrian economy. The public reaction to the consequences of market reforms and to the increasing democratization movements in different parts of the world also worried Assad, who had been resisting all demands for political reform in Syria. In addition, Assad's policy during the Gulf War had tarnished the image that he had cultivated in two decades as a Pan-Arab leader.

### **ASSAD: THE PRESIDENT/THE PREDOMINANT LEADER**

Hafiz al-Assad was the predominant leader of Syria during the Gulf Crisis and its immediate aftermath. He was the ultimate political authority and had the authority and power to commit the resources of his country to particular foreign policy and domestic policy goals. Although different constitutional institutions also existed in Syria during his leadership, he held the final say in all critical

decisions in Syrian politics. After the coup that brought him to power, he adopted coup-proofing techniques and did not allow anyone to challenge his authority for more than three decades.

Historical accounts and biographies of Assad demonstrate that Assad began to build his powerbase during his years as the commander of the air forces of Syria. According to Ma'oz (1988):

He began to turn the air-force into his power-base by lavishing special privileges on its officers, appointing his confidants to senior and sensitive positions and establishing an efficient intelligence network, independent of Syria's other intelligence operations and given assignments which were not all of immediate air force concern. (34)

While Syria was struggling with internal and external conflicts, Assad shrewdly empowered himself and extended his influence beyond the air force to the whole military. The studies about his ascendance to power demonstrate that he was extremely cautious and did not share his plans with anyone around him. He trusted only a few people who proved their total allegiance and loyalty to Assad throughout years. These careful and strategic political moves helped him to win the defense minister position in the cabinet. He extended his power in the army during these years. After the 1967 war with Israel, Assad accelerated the process of strengthening and expanding his authority within the country. Following the defeat in the war, most of the army came under the direct control of Assad's leadership. He also eliminated possible rivals and worked on creating the necessary conditions for his rise to country's leadership. After a brief struggle within the party, he succeeded in becoming the sole power-holder in Syria. During his presidency Assad continued to be the supreme leader of the army, party, and the country. According to Rabinovich (2001):

[T]he Syrian regime was a personal one that surrounded President Assad, and to a significant extent was the work of his own hands. At the same time, it was also a

family and even a tribal regime, owing to the central role played by members of Assad's family...and likewise members of his tribe, the Kalbiya. Notwithstanding Syria's close-knit relations with the communist regime of the Soviet Union, it was the personal, family-dominated regimes of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania and Kim Il Sung in North Korea that influenced and inspired the Syrian regime. Thus it was no surprise that Ceausescu's fall in December 1989 was a difficult experience for Assad...Assad's regime was also a sectarian one: it depended on the support of the Alawi community... (19)

Assad achieved his predominance in Syria through a series of different mechanisms. One of his first methods was generating a personality cult in Syria, which was intended to be the bastion of the legitimacy of his rule in Syria. With this cult, he built an image that extended beyond a leader or a president. He became a hero, a mythical figure, and a father for his country. The first step in building this cult was making Assad's image ubiquitous around Syria. As in other authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, every street corner in Syria and every public building and space was filled with the pictures and photos of Hafiz Assad. For some scholars, the degree of Hafiz Assad's presence and visibility was unprecedented in the history of authoritarian regimes. According to *Middle East Insight*:

In no other country in recent memory...not Mao's China, nor Tito's Yugoslavia, has the intensity of personality cult reached such extremes. Assad's image, speaking, smiling, listening, benevolent or stern, solemn, reflective is everywhere. Sometimes there are half a dozen pictures of him in a row. His face envelops telephone poles and trucks, churches and mosques. His is the visage a Syrian sees when he opens his newspaper. (Cited in Ma'oz 1988: 43)

These pictures and posters created the feeling within the Syrian population of an ever-present and omnipotent leader and ruler. In fact, Lisa Wedeen (1998) argued:

On any given day, Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad may be extolled as the nation's premier pharmacist, teacher, lawyer, or doctor; he may be pictured in the newspapers with foreign dignitaries, showing complete understanding of all issues. Following elections he is congratulated for winning more than 99 percent of the vote. Routinely in official discourse, Assad appears as the father, the combatant, the savior of Lebanon, the leader forever, or the gallant knight, the modern-day Salah-al-Din, after the original who wrestled Jerusalem from enemy control in 1187. Religious iconography and slogans attesting to his immortality bedeck the walls of buildings, the windows of taxi cabs and the doors of restaurants. (504)

Assad also employed Islamic symbols in order to establish his authority over the Syrian masses. He was the Alawi leader of the predominantly Sunni population of Syria, but in his practices he constantly tried to close the sectarian gap with the Sunni people, in some instances at the expense of his own religious beliefs.

In addition to employing these symbolic methods, Assad used formal and informal ways to maintain control of the society and the state apparatus. The constitution of Syria and the government structure that he created allowed him to lead, rule and control the bureaucratic machinery. As the president, Assad headed the formal state apparatus, and as the secretary-general of both the regional and national commands, he led the Ba'ath party hierarchy. As Hinnebusch (1996) stated, "the party has been downgraded, deideologized, and turned into a patronage machine with little capacity for independent action. It has no key decisions, above all in the foreign policy field, for a long time. Rather the party largely approves and justifies Assad's policies" (45).



The Syrian constitution also gave him full control of the military as commander-in-chief of the armed forces (Zisser, 1998: 16). In fact, he crafted the presidency to give him absolute power in political and military matters as well as legislative and administrative affairs (Ma'oz, 1988: 50). According to the 1973 Constitution, Assad had the rights to: “lay down the state's general policy and supervise its implementation” (Article 94); “appoint one or more Vice Presidents and delegate some of his duties to them...”; “... appoint the Prime Minister and his deputies and the ministers and their deputies”; and “accept their resignations, and dismiss them from their posts” (Article 95); “promulgate the laws approved by the People's Assembly”; “veto these laws through a decision, giving the reasons for this objection, within a month after their receipt by the President” (Article 98); “declare war and general mobilization and conclude peace following the approval by the People's Assembly” (Article 100); “declare and terminate a state of emergency in the manner stated in the law” (Article 101); act as “the supreme commander of the army and the armed forces” (Article 103); “ratify and abolish international treaties and agreements” (Article 104); “dissolve the People's Assembly” (Article 107); “appoint civilian and military officials and terminate their services” (Article 109); “assume legislative authority even when the Assembly is in session if it is extremely necessary in order to safeguard the country's national interests or the requirements of national security” (Article 111); and “in case of a grave danger or situation threatening national unity or the safety and independence of the homeland or obstructing state institutions from carrying out their constitutional responsibilities, the President of the Republic can take immediate measures necessitated by these circumstances” (Article 113).

In addition to this formal structure of power, Assad crafted an informal network through appointing his family members, relatives, and loyalists to key positions in the government. For example, his brothers Rifat and Jamil played constitutive roles during the early years of Assad's presidency. For many years, Rifat was the number two man in the regime. He was a member of the

Regional Command of the party and was commander of an elite division, the Defense Companies, which had been created to protect the regime against internal threats and to prevent regular military forces from toppling the regime (Zisser, 1998: 19). Assad's other brother Jamil was the ruler of the Alawite majority regions of Syria. He also established a paramilitary organization called the Ali Murtada Forces, whose members were predominantly selected from Alawite villages and whose main mission was to protect the regime against the threat of Islamic groups (ibid). 69

Assad also groomed other close relatives to be in his inner circle. He used familial ties to secure the survival of his regime. For example, he appointed his relative Adnan Makhluf as the head of the Republican Guards Unit, which in the late 1980s replaced the Defense Companies of Rifat Assad. Assad's cousin Adnan Assad headed the Struggle Companies, an elite force like the Republican Guards with a mission of providing internal security and stability. Finally, his son Basil was a prominent member of Assad's inner circle until his death in 1994. He became a commander in the Republican Guards Unit at a very young age and also had influence in different governmental institutions. After the sudden death of Basil in a traffic accident, his second son Basher was called back and appointed to the positions that Basil had occupied before his death.

In addition to strengthening his grip on power in Syria through family ties, Hafiz Assad also strengthened his grip through tribal and clan ties. For example, he exploited sectarian ties in order to prevent the formation of any coup attempt against his regime. He placed his co-sectarians in key positions of power. Alawi army and security officers constituted a powerful group within internal security agencies of the Syrian government. The Alawi soldiers and army officers in Syria were

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69The role and influence of Jamil and Rifat in the Assad regime continued until the early 1980s. After a confrontation with Rifat in the early 1980s, Assad became more vigilant and cautious about his brothers and his relatives.

regarded as the most significant guarantor of regime stability and security in the country. As stated by Ma'oz, Assad:

...relied heavily on his fellow Alawites in controlling the army, especially its combat units. Those officers, mostly members of the his family clan and tribe, who are in charge of security and intelligence networks are at the top of a pyramid whose higher, middle and even lower levels are filled with Alawites. They also hold senior or sensitive positions in the armored, mechanized and infantry divisions and brigades. ...Alawites constitute some 60 percent of the entire officer corps, about 50 percent of the senior officer corps holding commanding positions of most tank, artillery, infantry, navy and air defense units, most sensitive posts (i.e. operations and intelligence) in the General Staff Command as well as in personnel and indoctrination departments. Likewise, Alawite officers and NCOs staff most of the commandos and crack troops wearing distinct uniforms and enjoying special privileges. Finally, the majority of the cadets in military academies are Alawites and so are most of their commanders. (1988: 65)

Scholars and researchers have compared this power structure within Syria to the Italian mafia and Assad himself to a godfather. According to Zisser (1998), “the Alawis surrounding the president are then cast in the role of the musclemen who guard the godfather’s preeminent position. Most particularly they come into play during the power struggles following a godfather’s death” (22). According to Seale, Assad chose everyone around him carefully and after they kept the positions that he gave them for decades. In fact:

Just as he was consistent in his political principles, so he seemed extraordinarily reluctant to change the faces around him: it was in Assad’s temperament to put a

high price on loyalty. His personal staff at the presidency, even clerks and coffee makers, remained unchanged year after year and repaid his trust with devotion. (1988: 179)

In addition, almost half a dozen intelligence agencies, which were formed by Assad in order to spy on enemies of the regime as well as on one another, were controlled by trusted Alawi leaders. The leaders of these agencies directly reported to Assad any suspicious activities. According to Ma'oz, he was the best protected Middle Eastern leader during his lifetime (1988: 57).

In addition to creating parallel armies and appointing close friends as commanders of different units, Assad provided substantial material subsidies to the members of officer corps to satisfy their corporate interests. Petran (1972) reported in those years:

They receive higher salaries than individuals of comparable civilian status....get medical care and generous travel allowances. Army co-operatives provide them with every conceivable article at cost price as well as duty-free foreign imports not available to the rest of the population. Interest-free loans enable them to buy houses and villas...Every city has its officers' club, invariably best in town. Careers involving social prestige and good salaries are open to officers on a wide scale (after retirement). Some move into the diplomatic service...government ministries and departments and to state enterprises. (253)

Through these economic incentives, Assad aimed to prevent the emergence of any form of opposition within the military against his regime and coup-proof his rule in Syria.

It has been stated by scholars of Syrian politics that the form of centralization that Assad organized was unprecedented in Syrian history. He did not share power with others and instead preferred to

monopolize power over the Syrian government and society (Ma'oz, 1988: 51). Nobody could overturn or repeal his decisions during his presidency. His decisions were usually regarded as final decisions. According to scholars, like Perthes (1995), Assad during his tenure served as “decision maker of last resort where subordinate policy-makers like the Prime Minister, despite their legal competences, do not want or dare to take certain decisions” (224). Assad used this predominance in Syrian politics in both domestic and foreign policy realms. He was interested in running the foreign affairs of Syria from the first day he was in office. It was his main pre-occupation during his reign. He formulated, designed, and implemented every one of Syria’s major foreign policies. As Hinnebusch (1998) stated, “foreign policy making in Syria is the reserved sphere of the Presidency. It is not subject to bureaucratic politics in which hawkish or dovish factions can shape or veto the president’s decisions. Periodic rotation of office holders prevents regime barons from staffing their domains with durable clients and establishing independent power bases” (177). He was the ultimate decision maker of Syria during the foreign policy crises that his country faced, including the Lebanon conflict, wars with Israel, skirmishes with Iraq and Jordan, and conflicts with Turkey. He was the main negotiator during the peace process with Israel and seldom delegated authority in relations with Western countries. As Hinnebusch stated, foreign policymaking in Syria was a reserved sphere of Assad and no bureaucratic politics could veto his initiatives (2002). After conducting field research for a long time in Syria, Seale summarized Assad’s dominance of Syrian foreign affairs with the following words:

Assad’s sense of limited resources and permanent siege have undoubtedly had an impact on the way he runs his country and conducts his diplomacy. His regime is a very personal one. He insists on controlling everything and in particular foreign affairs and information because, unlike more powerful leaders who walk away from their blunders, he can ill afford to make a mistake. At every stage he risks being

knocked out of the altogether, and that remains the main hope of his enemies.  
(1988: 494)

### **ASSAD'S LEADERSHIP STYLE**

During the Gulf Crisis and in its immediate aftermath, Hafiz Assad was one of the most visible state leaders among the Middle Eastern leaders. After many years of international isolation and demonization during the Cold War by Western media and governments because of his alignment with the Soviet Union and because of his support for militia groups, for the first time Assad was at the center of attention in world politics. His support of the coalition forces during the Gulf Crisis and his later participation in the peace negotiations and Madrid process raised his stature in Western countries. After the Gulf War, almost every Western country's leader or a representative visited Damascus and met Assad, including Secretary of State James Baker. Arab leaders, including Egypt's President Mubarak who for years had not been on good terms with Assad, came to Damascus to meet with Hafiz Assad. The leaders of Gulf countries and the King of Saudi Arabia also met with Assad and pledged support and financial assistance to Syria.

The leadership trait analysis for Hafiz Assad is also based on a content analysis of his interview responses during the Gulf Crisis and its immediate aftermath. Although like other authoritarian leaders of the Middle East, Assad mostly preferred to address the Syrian people via radio or television and make long speeches during ceremonies instead of accepting interview requests, there exist several domestic interviews with him. In addition to this, his interviews with Western journalists which were later translated into Arabic and published or broadcasted in Syrian journals and TV stations are also taken into account in this study.

As in the cases of Saddam Hussein and King Hussein, Assad's words are examined according to seven traits that have implications on how leaders conduct their foreign policies, including the types

of actions they are likely to urge on their governments, and the way they structure and interact with their advisory systems (Hermann, 2005a). These scores are later analyzed in relation to other Middle Eastern and Arab leaders, who constitute the cultural subset of world leaders comparable with Hafiz Assad.

Hafiz al-Assad	Interview	Norming Group Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Compared to Norming Group
Belief in Controlling Events	0.38	0.32	0.04	High
Need for Power	0.28	0.25	0.03	High
Conceptual Complexity	0.63	0.58	0.03	High
Self-Confidence	0.40	0.36	0.10	Moderate
Task Orientation	0.58	0.59	0.06	Moderate
Distrust of Others	0.08	0.18	0.06	Low
In-Group Bias	0.15	0.13	0.02	High

Table 4: Hafiz al-Assad's Leadership Style

### *Challenging Constraints*

According to the leadership trait analysis, Hafiz Assad's score on "need for power" is high compared to other Middle Eastern leaders. His score on "belief in controlling events" is also high compared to his norming group. These scores demonstrate that Hafiz Assad was a constraint challenger during and in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf Crisis. His high score in need for power and high belief in controlling events also show that he is comfortable both in direct and indirect challenges of constraints. According to studies on leadership style, these leaders know what they want and take charge to see that it happens. They therefore prefer to choose strategies to challenge the constraints according to the contexts; however, they also always push the limits of what is possible.

Assad was a challenger of constraints during the international crises in the region, including the Gulf Crisis of 1990 and 1991 and the Madrid Peace Process. He challenged both domestic and external constraints in different circumstances by using various mechanisms. At the very beginning of the Gulf Crisis, his support of the coalition forces was a challenge to domestic public opinion. Since his rise to power, Assad had always aimed to be the leader of the Arab world. His most important source of legitimacy during his reign was defending Arab interests and territories against the Western-supported Israeli forces and being one of the staunchest supporters of the Pan-Arab ideology. Assad acted as the frontline leader of the Arab world against Israel, particularly after the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel in 1979. Although his credibility as the Pan-Arab leader was damaged because of his intervention in Lebanon and his support of Iran during the Iran-Iraq War in 1980s, he always tried to legitimize his policies by stressing the immediate threat of Israel to the Arab world. With Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Assad faced another important regional crisis at his door. Although the Arab regional order immediately condemned the aggression of Iraq against its neighbor, the public opinion in Arab countries remained ambivalent about this action. Ordinary Arabs' dislike of and resentment toward Gulf countries' wealth, arrogance, and opposition to sharing their oil revenues curbed a possible public outcry against this aggression. These feelings



were most visible in countries without any natural resources, such as Syria. When US and foreign forces began to arrive on the Holy Lands of Saudi Arabia, the reaction of the Arab public grew exponentially. For ordinary Arabs, this was not only a source of humiliation for the Arab world but also a disrespectful act to the sacred lands of Muslims. The public opinion and opposition to the international coalition grew stronger with Saddam Hussein's verbal and physical attacks to Israel and with the initiation of air attacks on Iraqi cities.

### *Openness and Closedness to Information*

Hafiz Assad's score on "conceptual complexity" is high in comparison to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders and his self-confidence score is moderate in comparison to his norming group. A high score in "conceptual complexity" together with a moderate score in "self-confidence" demonstrate that Hafiz Assad was open to information and contextual cues. He was patient and took his time to see what would succeed and then acted in accordance with that decision.

Those who wrote biographies about Hafiz Assad and those who followed Assad during his presidency asserted that Assad preferred to learn the opinions of some of his close advisors before making certain foreign policy decisions. Hermann, in her analysis of Assad's leadership style, underlined this trait of Assad's leadership. According to her, Assad maintained control over policy making within the government "by being the center of the network of information, and by consulting on important decisions with those likely to be affected by any policies or actions" (1988: 74). Dawisha also mentioned this characteristic of Assad's leadership:

Very rarely, indeed extremely rarely, would the President take an important decision without prior evaluation and consultations within the Government and sometimes from outside it, such as university professors. Consultations usually centre on important members of the Party and sometimes the Progressive National Front. If

there is no time, he will certainly make a point of at least contacting by phone some members of the party leadership. He rarely makes an instinctive decision. (1980: 52)

In his study on the Assad regime, Salloukh also emphasized Assad's long consultations with the Regional Command of the Ba'ath Party before making foreign policy choices. According to him, Assad had a number of very close advisors in the Regional Command whom he consulted before making foreign policy decisions. Chief among them was Abdel Halim Khaddam, who was Foreign Minister and Vice-President for Foreign Affairs in the Assad regime. It was only after the appointment of Farouq al-Shar as Minister of Foreign Affairs that Khaddam lost his influence on foreign policy decisions. In addition, long time Chief of Staff Hikmat al-Shihabi was a member of Assad's inner circle on foreign policy and security issues. Other important advisors to Assad included his brother Rifat Assad until his expulsion from the ruling group in 1984, Major General Naji Jamil, and Major General Muhammad al-Khuli who headed the Presidential Intelligence Committee and was the commander of the air force (Salloukh, 2000: 408). According to Salloukh, Assad also received foreign policy advice from other experts in this field. According to him:

...Assad is prone to thorough analysis and consideration of any contemplated foreign policy choice. During the early years of his presidency, he established a tradition of eliciting executive papers from some forty Syrian academics on a range of foreign policy issues. He was even known to consult with some of them over the phone. (2000: 409)

However, while he was receiving all of this information and advice from those around him, he was acting very strategically. Despite the advisors around him and his openness to contextual cues and policy recommendations, he always remained the sole and final decision maker in the foreign policy making process. In fact, as stated by Seale (1989), although there were different forms of state

apparatus, Assad's "authority was so vast and his control of detail so tight that he was without question the ultimate decision maker on matters big and small" (343). According to Maoz (1986), "such an absolute presidential is unprecedented and highly significant in Syrian political history" (51).

#### *Motivation by Problem or Relationship*

Hafiz Assad's trait analysis during the Gulf Crisis and its immediate aftermath demonstrates that his score is moderate in "motivation for seeking office", which indicates that Hafiz Assad was focusing on relationships or a task in different circumstances. This score shows that he was evaluating situations on a case by case basis. Leaders with moderate task orientation score direct their attention to a specific problem when that is appropriate to the situation at hand or try to build relationships when that seems more relevant. Depending on the situation, they can push toward their political goals or focus their attention on keeping the loyalty of their people. As stated by Hermann, these leaders can move between a concern of solving a problem and a concern of ensuring the unity and support of his people. (Hermann, 2005c)

To be motivated by a particular goal in some circumstances is not surprising for an authoritarian leader in a Middle Eastern country, like Assad, who always had had goals of recapturing Golan Heights and gaining a definite victory in Lebanon. During the Gulf Crisis, in some instances he focused his attention to Lebanon and tried to consolidate his authority in the region by sending troops to the Syrian and Lebanon border and by purchasing high amounts of ammunition and weaponry from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. However in the same period, in other circumstances he reversed focus and again sought to strengthen its relations with his people in Syria. As stated in previous chapters Assad's score is surprising due to the common assumption that authoritarian leaders do not need to respond to public opinion and try to form relationships.

As mentioned above, during the Gulf War and its immediate aftermath, Assad encountered some serious problems in Syria's economy and society. His regime was facing increasing societal pressure for democratization after the social changes in Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, he had concerns about his popularity among the Syrian people since he was a member of the Alawite minority, which constituted only 12 percent of the Syrian population, and since he had been increasingly alienated from the society after the suppression of the Sunni revolt in Hama. Under these circumstances, Assad's main preoccupations turned out to be providing group maintenance, keeping the loyalty of his constituents, and unifying ethnically, politically and religiously diverse groups under his own leadership. An anecdote that was circulated among the Syrian population after the pseudo-presidential elections demonstrated the extent of his interest in and concern about maintaining the support of his people. After this election, in which Assad received almost 99% of the votes, he asked his aides to figure out who were the people within that 1% who did not vote for him. In fact, despite the authoritarian nature of the regime in Syria and the legal, political and military power of Assad to confront any form of dissent activity, he was still eager to gain the support and backing of his people.

As other Arab leaders, Hafiz Assad, throughout his reign, took into consideration public opinion and stressed the necessity of bettering relations between him and Syrians. For instance, when Kissinger met with Assad in the 1970s, he noticed that Assad was extremely concerned about public opinion. According to Kissinger's memoirs, Assad thought about the Arab public opinion at every turn of the negotiations (Kissinger, 1982: 1087). Kissinger was convinced that the public mood was a genuine consideration in shaping Syria's decisions. As Zisser (1998) stated:

He recognized an authentic need on the part of Assad to satisfy Syrian public opinion, secure its support, and convince it of the correctness of his chosen part.

He sensed in Assad a genuine commitment to his overall worldview and believed that his concern for broad public support stemmed from his personal character and the character of the regime he headed. In his memoirs, Kissinger points to Assad's habit of convening very lengthy meetings with his principal associates; he does not regard that practice as a means to exhaust his interlocutor, but as a genuine concern for domestic reactions. (7)

While interpreting Kissinger's comments and evaluations, Zisser underlined that Kissinger's interpretations revealed a vital side of Assad's political personality. For Zisser (1998):

It should be stressed that Kissinger's observations are not at all tantamount to saying that Assad is a weak leader. On the contrary, one might well regard Assad's quest for public support and the degree to which he had gained it as a source of strength marking him off from other Arab leaders.... True, his awareness has rendered Assad cautious, even hesitant, but it has also provided the basis on which his accomplishments rest. This is true first and foremost of the achievement of domestic stability—and thus of Assad's own political survival. (8)

Seale also mentioned this dimension of Assad's leadership. According to him:

Assad's rule was not based on force alone, nor would it have survived had it been so... The factor of public approval was not negligible, Arab regimes such as his, so often derided as oriental despotisms, in fact required a measure of popular consent, and the importance of public opinion could be gauged by the strenuous efforts made to mobilize it, by the repeated exercises in public self-justification, and the by the strident media campaigns which rival Arab states waged against each other. Both

the leaders and the led sensed that once popular consent was withdrawn, the substance went out of a regime. (Seale, 1989: 178)

### *Motivation towards the World*

Hafiz Assad's score on "distrust of others" is low compared to other Middle Eastern and Islamic leaders and his score on "in-group-bias" is high compared to other leaders. According to these scores, Assad perceived world politics essentially as a zero-sum game; however, contrary to those who see the world in Hobbesian terms, he also believed that the international system is bounded by some international norms. In fact, for leaders like Hafiz Assad, there are a set of adversaries who are considered external others, including the Zionist threat and Israel, and confrontation with these external threats is viewed as ongoing. However, as they work to protect their countries against these threats, they also enhance their countries' capabilities and relative statuses. Their main focus is to deal with threats and solve problems at the same time. Assad chose to follow these multiple strategies during the Gulf Crisis. While he was dealing with domestic problems caused by his support of the international coalition and trying to stop the pan-Arabist propaganda campaign of Saddam Hussein, he always kept his mind on his eternal enemy -- the state of Israel. Therefore, during the Gulf Crisis, he tried to consolidate his rule in Lebanon and sent contingencies to the Israeli border in order to stop any kind of military threat from Israel, despite repeated guarantees by the United States.

### **THE USE OF DIVERSIONARY MECHANISMS**

Assad was aware of the increasing number of anti-regime voices in Syrian society as a result of Syria's economic and social problems. The unions and political parties, in particular, were expressing their criticisms more frequently and more vocally. He knew what these complaints could mean for the survival of his regime. Although he was ruling his country with an iron fist, throughout his rule,

he was also trying to respond to the demands on the streets. For example, his regime had always preferred to keep taxes extra low in the country in order to please the masses. As a result, the tax revenues had constituted only a small percentage of the government budget. According to Pipes, unlike failed dictators in different parts of the world, such as Romania's Ceausescu, Assad chose to go without money rather than to extract funds from his people (1998: 17). For other scholars who specialize on the Assad era and the policy makers who interacted with him, public opinion sometimes went beyond an issue of concern for Assad and became an issue of fear and anxiety for him. According to Pipes (1998):

The Syrian leadership professes not only to take public opinion seriously but even to fear the consequences of disregarding it. As Assad quotes himself in conversation with a Western official, "You always talk to us about Israel's public opinion and make us feel as if we have no public opinion but are a herd of sheep. I think you are way off the mark in this assessment. Our public opinion supports us as long as we support public aspirations and just causes."... "I am confident that I enjoy massive popular confidence in our country, and yet, if I did something the Syrian masses interpreted as being contrary to their aspirations, I might pay the price as others did."

(18)

In fact, during his presidency, Assad witnessed that leaders who failed to understand the significance of public opinion ended up bringing disaster to themselves and their countries. According to James Baker, who met several times with Assad during the Madrid Peace Process, Assad was extremely careful in his decisions and extremely considerate of Arab public opinion. During the negotiations:

Assad repeatedly stressed the need for decisions to be understood properly and supported fully by the public at large. Assad once remarked “if you were in my place...you wouldn’t be more flexible than I am now.”

At another point...referring to a US proposal regarding the United Nations (UN) role in the future peace conference, he reportedly told Baker: “We will lose Arab public opinion...They will know what is going on. This would not only be adventurism, it would be a form of suicide.” (Zisser, 1998: 6)

In order to win the hearts and minds of the Syrian people, Assad constantly used issues related to Syrian foreign policy. He employed strategies to rally people in many different instances throughout his long career. Israel constituted an especially important and feasible scapegoat for Assad when he was confronted with domestic economic and social problems.

Although every Middle Eastern leader used the threat of Israel at least once for domestic political purposes, Assad had an advantage over other Middle Eastern leaders in the scapegoating of Israel for domestic problems. Assad was the leader of a frontline state in the struggle between Arabs and Israel and he had been the defense minister of Syria during the Six-Day War and the president of Syria during the Yom Kippur War. In fact, according to scholars like Zisser, Assad’s domestic prestige and strength derived from his stance on the conflict with Israel and from his attitudes on pan-Arab issues (Zisser, 1998: 17). For him, “Syrian foreign policy has...enabled the regime to maintain its domestic position in two ways: first by making use of its achievements in this arena and second, by exploiting challenges and difficulties in the regional and international arena to mobilize support or to divert public attention from domestic problems” (Zisser, 2001: 70). Ma’oz also stated that Arab unity and rivalry with Israel were the major pretexts of Assad’s purge campaigns and the principal themes of his public speeches. The Palestinian issue, in particular, constituted an important



part of Assad's diversionary agenda. According to Ma'oz (1989), "He has essentially used this cause to advance his aims both domestically and externally...In Syria his support for the Palestinians' aspirations has been used to strengthen his legitimacy as an Arab ruler..." (84-119). Pipes also indicated the diversionary motivations for Assad's pro-Palestinian policies. According to him, Assad conducted foreign policy mostly to strengthen his grip on power in Syria. As a result, "Assad has propounded pro-Palestinian, anti-Zionist policies in the twin hopes of diverting the country's attention from unpleasant realities at home and making common cause with the majority of the Syrian population" (Pipes, 1998: 14).

In the early years of the 1990s when Syria began to witness domestic economic and social problems and his regime was on the verge of a legitimacy crisis, Assad repeated this strategy of employing foreign policy for domestic purposes (Lawson, 1994: 63). The two earlier chapters demonstrated that leaders may pursue both peaceful and conflict-prone external policies when they need to deflect the attention of their domestic constituencies. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, Assad opted to use these strategies one after another and close in time to each other in order to boost his domestic support.

The first strategy that he adopted after the Gulf War was a peace-making strategy with Israel. Although a peace deal with Israel would be unpopular among some segments of the Syrian population, it was dramatic enough to deflect the public's attention from domestic problems. Assad employed the state-controlled official media, including Damascus Radio and *al-Ba'ath Daily* to shift the agenda of the people from domestic hardships to foreign policy issues. The state-controlled Syrian media launched a campaign for starting peace negotiations with Israel. It was something totally unexpected for the people of Syria. The Syrian public, which was unaccustomed to this

discourse, suddenly shifted its focus from domestic problems to the news and analysis of the peace process and the possibility of an everlasting peace agreement with Israel.

The official media was instrumental in presenting the peace process in a way that could both deflect the attention of the domestic public and boost the popularity of Assad within Syria. The same newspapers that used to publish threats against Israel and call on the people to unify against the state of Israel changed their discourse and began campaigns to unite the people of Syria in favor of a long-lasting peace in the region. Through the use of editorials and commentaries and speeches by Assad to the Syrian population, the government succeeded in mobilizing the people in favor of a peace agreement with Israel. Newspapers and politicians who used to express the unacceptability of any peace deal without Israel's total withdrawal from the occupied territories began to publicize more nuanced viewpoints and propagated the idea of a victory through a peace agreement and also emphasized the leadership of Assad in this process. They even characterized the peace process as a success of Hafiz al-Assad's strategy. According to an editorial in *al-Ba'ath Daily*:

Immediately after the cessation of the Gulf War, Damascus became the mecca of several Arab and international delegations. Damascus then embarked on a comprehensive move toward Arab and world capitals...

Syria's intensive political moves at the current delicate and grave stage, led with wisdom, courage and pan-Arab concern by President Hafiz al-Assad, aims at enabling the Arabs to take the initiative before they are overtaken by events... (FBIS-NES-91-070, 11 April 1991)

The United States' invitation to Syria for an international conference at Madrid was also reflected as a victory for Assad's regime by the Syrian media. President Assad's positive response to the invitation, in particular, was publicized as a rallying point for the Syrian masses. Newspapers and

politicians called on the Syrian public to celebrate the triumph of Assad over the Israeli state. In a commentary on Damascus Radio, it was stated that:

...The Arab quarters in general, and the Palestinian quarters in particular, have welcomed leader al-Assad's letter with ardent satisfaction.

President Bush expressed satisfaction with the Syrian response and so did the US Secretary of State. Capitals of the big nations also expressed satisfaction. Thus, the ball, as all observers say, is now in Israel's court... (FBIS-NES-91-137, 17 July 1991)

In another editorial, *al-Ba'ath* applauded the leadership qualities of Assad and considered his move a major success in world politics. According to *al-Ba'ath*:

Throughout its long conflict with the Zionist enemy, the Arab nation faced many sharp political, military, and economic crises. These crises were aimed to prevent the Arabs, together or separately, from catching their breath. Through these known crises that need to be detailed, wagers were made on Syria because all people realized its size and role. And knew that under the leadership of struggler Hafiz al-Assad it pioneers the confrontation of the dangers surrounding the nation, and is capable of warding off these dangers through positions gained world admiration and gathered the Arab masses from all arenas of struggle...

Syria...through leader al-Assad's wisdom and ability to deal with the changes, has blocked the road before the enemy and returned the ball to the enemy's court. Hence the enemy is confused, isolated, and exposed before all world countries that seek peace and justice, renounce injustice, war and aggression...

Leader al-Assad's great positions are not only for the sake of Syria but also for the sake of a nation that looks forward to its rights without making concession or bargains. Seeking peace and justice is a normal right of all peoples. When the world stresses that we are peace advocates, this means that we have won one of the most important rounds of our ongoing conflict with the enemy until we attain our legitimate objectives which the world supports with conviction and respect. (FBIS-NES-91-140, 22 July 1991)

Another government-owned newspaper *al-Thawrah* interpreted the event as the confirmation of the leadership of Syria in the Arab world:

It is natural for Damascus to assume this position. It has always been the center of regional and pan-Arab decision making. Hafiz al-Assad has always been an extraordinary leader and a leader of this decision making. In Damascus, the future of the region is in the making and its content and direction hinge on Damascus.

When the Arab media say that Hafiz al-Assad's Syria is the guarantee and the center of pan-Arab decision making, the pan-Arab equation, and the comprehensive view, Arabs are in fact acknowledging an existing objective reality. Hafiz al-Assad has always been like this, and will remain so now and in the future. (FBIS-NES-91-140, 22 July 1991)

In fact, with the help of the Syrian media, Assad launched a crusade for peace to rally people around his leadership. During this process, all domestic attention was diverted toward the peace process and away from domestic economic and social problems and political deadlocks. Assad and his regime also utilized his high-level meetings with foreign dignitaries, and especially with US envoys, as ways

to strengthen his legitimacy and consolidate his authority within Syria. For example, Damascus Radio reported a meeting between Assad and Baker as follows:

Recognizing Damascus as the key to peace in the region and appreciating its constructiveness, Secretary of State Baker made Damascus his first port of call. Emerging optimistic from in-depth talks with President Hafiz al-Assad, Baker emphasized the importance of Syria's constructive step to open new horizons and overturn old assumptions, placing the historic responsibilities on the shoulders of all parties involved. (FBIS-NES -91-140, 22 July 1991)

Through these methods, the Syrian regime succeeded in deflecting the attention of Syrian people and more importantly, in mobilizing them around the leadership of Hafiz Assad. As Lawson stated, everybody in Syria began to discuss this new phenomenon of foreign policy. After constant mobilization of country against the threat of Israel for thirty years, Assad's peace policy resulted in a significant diversion among Syrian people. For the prior thirty years, Assad, as well as all other Arab Middle Eastern leaders, had made use of the Arab- Israeli conflict in many instances in order to divert the attention of their domestic publics from recurring domestic problems. Considering Syria's position as a frontline state in the conflict with Israel, it had been easy for the Assad regime to convince the Syrian people of the existential dimension of this conflict and its predominance over domestic problems. Domestic opposition within Syria had always faced the danger of being identified with the biggest enemy of the Arab world—Israel. In light of these factors, Assad's use of the start of peace talks as a form of diversion was a very brave political move. His foresight was correct in the sense that Syrian society suddenly stopped talking about other problems and focused on the possibility of a peace agreement. The above quotations from government-controlled newspapers and radio stations demonstrate that Assad aimed to portray this situation as a well-

planned and crafted strategy intended to corner Israel and win the battle of peace as revenge for the war against Israel that he lost. As Hinnebusch stated Assad conducted the peace process just as one conducts a military campaign and as a result of this his involvement in this process created a similar rally effect (2002: 160). During this period, Assad was portrayed domestically as the hero of diplomacy and negotiations. His strategic calculations and tactical struggles were praised and the peace process was depicted as the most significant nonviolent battle of the Arab world. In fact, just going to the negotiation table was described as a success for the Syrian people.

The positive impact of Assad's diversionary peacemaking strategy did not last long. As stated by scholars of diversionary studies, diversionary impact is never permanent. Diversionary strategies only provide temporary relief for leaders troubled with domestic problems by distracting the public's opinion and shifting the agenda of the country to a foreign policy problem. Newspaper headlines and society's attention will eventually return to the country's more troubling problems once the influence of external developments declines. Many leaders must constantly mobilize society against an external other in order to continuously divert attention from domestic problems. In the Syrian case, Assad shifted his diversionary strategy from a peaceful one to a conflictual one once the impact of peaceful diversion began to decline and the Syrian society began to raise their voices again about domestic problems.

The main reason for the change in discourse was the deteriorating condition of the economy after the Gulf War. Popular dissatisfaction, particularly over the effects of the regime's economic liberalization, intensified during this period. According to Lawson (1996), "In April leftist deputies in the People's assembly criticized the planned reductions in social welfare spending and low tax rates on private enterprises contained in the draft 1992-1993 budget" (153). The unions also became increasingly vocal about their disaffection with

Assad's economic policies. For instance, members of the Farm Laborers' Federation expressed their resentment toward the government's plans to support private agricultural exports (ibid). Assad responded to these increasing and intensifying popular demands by emphasizing the urgency of national security matters. He particularly underlined possible attacks by Israel and asked the labor unions to postpone their demands and prioritize national interest and national security. An excellent example of this discourse was Assad's keynote speech at the assembly of the General Federation of Trade Unions. In this speech, Assad constantly stressed the need to defend the homeland and indicated the rising threat of Israel, especially after the Gulf War and with the migration of Jews from the Soviet Union. As Lawson (1996) described:

The president began by praising the delegates for their many accomplishments in the areas of factory construction, dam building and technical training. He then asserted: "Great as those achievements are, the greatest is our national unity, which is our pride." The honor of the nation, he went on to say, lay in the fact "that the achievement was accomplished within the framework of a coherent and strong national unity that achieved security and consolidated both stability and progress." Finally, President Assad expressed his gratitude that the trade unionists "understood freedom within the framework of responsibility and distinguished between interacting in the context of integration to reach a goal (on one hand) and contradiction and fragmentation which lead to wasted effort and crumbling power (on the other)." The necessity of forging internal unity as a means of ensuring external security could not have been stated more clearly. The assembled trade unionists undoubtedly got the message. (148)

In fact, after several similar speeches, the Syrian people, by and large, captured the meaning and significance of these addresses. According to Lawson (1996), “in the light of the gravity of the external security issues addressed by the president, it would have been trifling, if not in fact seditious, to raise the more mundane matter of restructuring trade union-party relations” (148). Every Syrian was called on to unite and rally around his president under these circumstances and forget about his resentments and problems. The external security issues were more critical for Syria and domestic issues could be shelved for the time being. According to Lawson 1996):

Mobilizing industrial workers and farm laborers to carry on the struggle against Israel thus did more than distract these forces’ attention from their rapidly accumulating domestic grievances; it also provided the al-Assad coalition with the resources necessary to win their continued allegiance to the regime. (156)

Lawson in his study of domestic politics and foreign policy interaction demonstrated that Assad shifted these strategies pretty frequently between 1990 and 1993. During the period of peace negotiations, in particular, Assad continuously utilized different types of diversionary strategies. According to Lawson, there were three periods of thaw, in which Assad followed a more conciliatory approach in the negotiations with Israel, at least in public discourse. For Lawson, these periods coincided with phases of economic or social problems. In his study, he stated:

It is worth noting that the dynamics of this situation run almost directly counter to much writing on the general connection between domestic conflict and foreign policy, which presumes that growing internal difficulties tend to prompt regimes to undertake conflictual or aggressive foreign policies, rather than comparatively accommodative ones. In the case of contemporary Syria, the Assad regime’s long standing belligerence towards Israel made a further escalation in the level of hostility



directed against the old enemy considerably less effective as a means of galvanizing popular sentiment than adopting an uncharacteristic, and thus anticipated, softer line.

(Lawson; 146)

During these thaw periods, he shifted the debate and discussion to the peace process with Israel and then after a while, he abandoned this discourse. Rubin also stated the strategic nature of this peace process for Assad. According to him, Assad already knew that a possible peace could be dangerous for the future of his regime. For decades, Assad, as all other Arab leaders, had insisted that he would never pursue a peace deal with Israel. His position had been solidified after the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel. After this event, any attempt by an Arab state toward peace with Israel was perceived an act of betrayal. Moreover, peace with Israel would bring significant threats to the survival of the Syrian regime. According to Rubin (2007):

Such a diplomatic achievement would open the door for most other Arab states to have relations with Israel and to work with it on matters of common interest...In addition, an Israel-Lebanon agreement would follow any Israel-Syria accord, reducing Damascus's leverage in that country and bringing international pressure for a Syrian withdrawal. (107)

Furthermore, this kind of an agreement would damage Assad's ambition to be the leader or at least representative of the Arab nation. In sum, the reason Assad adopted a more peaceful strategy with Israel several times between 1990 and 1993 was to deflect Syrians' attention from domestic problems. After a brief period of time, he abandoned this course of action in favor of a more classical form of conflictual diversionary strategy. While following these zigzags in foreign policy, "Hafiz made no real political, social and economic reforms at home. All the country's problems continued to smolder but not to burn. His response made sense in terms of the regime's interests.

Maneuvers on the foreign policy scene were enough to bring sufficient domestic support for the government” (Rubin, 2007: 102).

Assad’s foreign policy choices during the Gulf Crisis and in its immediate aftermath and his motivations have been subjects of contention among the scholars of Syrian politics. Scholars offered different explanations about the changes in Syrian foreign policy during this period.

According to some scholars the change in foreign policy was a result of the transformation of international system from a bipolar one to a unipolar one (Hinnebusch, 1996). The proponents of this view argued that Syria was forced to bandwagon to the peace process after the fall of the Soviet Union, the dramatic change in balance of power in international politics. The end of the Cold War confirmed US dominance in world politics and the rapid victory of the US forces in the Gulf War demonstrated the supremacy of US power. Especially the military capabilities of the US showed Assad that “strategic parity” was no longer an option for Syria. After taking into consideration these developments, Assad started to change his foreign policy and participated in the peace process. So it was essentially international politics that determined the Syrian foreign policy during the peace process. However, although international politics may have led Assad to accept Bush’s proposal of a peace conference, it fails to explain constant changes in his foreign policy during the same period. Between 1991 and 1993 when Assad was following different sets of foreign policies towards Israel, the US was consolidating its supremacy in international politics and international relations remained unipolar. As explained above, after a short rally around the idea of peace agreement, he shifted his discourse on Israel and the peace process and followed a hardliner approach against Israel.

The second alternative explanation is about the dire condition of Syrian economy. According to this explanation, Assad made his foreign policy decisions by taking into account the situation of the Syrian economy during this period. The proponents of this argument argue that a peace agreement

with Israel would enable Syrian government to receive financial assistance and credit from the Western countries. After the end of the Cold War, in the absence of a socialist bloc which for decades had provided financial assistance for Syria, Assad needed the economic support of the Western countries and one way to start this rapprochement was a peace agreement with Israel. So it was a strategic and calculated move by Assad to solve the immediate economic problems of Syria (Hinnebusch, 1996). However the economic factors alone could not explain the changes in the foreign policy of Assad during this period. Again, this motivation cannot explain constant changes in Syrian foreign policy in this time period towards Israel and towards the peace process. Moreover, a peace agreement would not only bring economic gains but it would also incur costs to the Syrian economy. Many oil rich Arab countries were providing financial assistance for Syria because of its status as a front-line country against a possible Israeli aggression. A peace agreement would result in the stopping of this financial assistance.

### **LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THE SELECTION OF DIVERSIONARY STRATEGIES**

Hafiz Assad's leadership traits and his use of multiple diversionary strategies reveal some important insights about the relationship between leadership traits and selection of diversionary strategies. Like the previous two cases, Assad's case demonstrates that authoritarian leaders are as eager to use diversionary mechanisms as their democratic counterparts. The case also shows that small states, regardless of their military capability and power, have the ability to employ diversionary mechanisms just like the great powers. The existence of different forms of diversionary mechanisms allows them to use less costly and risky foreign policy ventures in order to deflect the attention of their domestic public and gain popular backing and support. However, more significantly this case demonstrates that a leader can use multiple diversionary strategies within a short period of time and he can shift from one diversionary strategy to another when he deems it necessary and useful.

In terms of the relationship between leadership styles and the selection of different diversionary mechanisms, Assad's case shows that leaders who challenge constraints are likely to use diversionary mechanisms. As mentioned in Chapter Three, both diversionary use of force and diversionary peacemaking are ways of challenging the domestic constraints of public opinion, opposition groups, and domestic institutions, such as the legislative assembly and the military. The use of diversionary strategies usually cause opposition groups within the society to delay or forget their "less existential" demands and objections. Among the constraint challenger leaders, those who are skillful in challenging constraints both directly and indirectly, like Hafiz Assad, are able to successfully employ multiple strategies to deal with domestic opposition.

The task orientation score of Hafiz al-Assad reveals that he was relationship-oriented, which challenges previous assumptions regarding the lack of accountability of leaders in authoritarian regimes. It demonstrates that even in the most authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, leaders can be relationship oriented in some instances and motivated to obtain and maintain the support of their own people. They can try to achieve this aim by engaging in foreign policy ventures. Middle Eastern leaders are not exceptions to this rule. Numerous leaders of Middle Eastern countries have employed the strategy of manipulating a foreign policy-related event in order to regain their legitimacy and standing. Assad also used different diversionary foreign policy mechanisms in order to gain support and popularity among his people. The quotations from newspapers and journals above demonstrated that Assad was trying to raise his stature and to make his people rally around his leadership by using mass media. Those articles and editorials in government-controlled media outlets were intended to increase the Syrian people's support of and loyalty to Assad either because of his diplomatic victories in peacemaking or his courageous leadership against a threat like Israel.

Assad's openness to information may also account for his selection of diversionary mechanisms. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Saddam Hussein's openness to information and contextual cues helped him to shape his diversionary behavior throughout the Gulf Crisis amid domestic problems. Saddam Hussein preferred to intensify his attacks against Israel when he realized that the Arab public was fairly responsive to his diversionary strategies. As stated in that chapter, a leader's openness to information allows him to adjust his policy preferences in accordance with contextual cues and incoming information. Assad, who was also open to information during the Gulf Crisis and its immediate aftermath, tried to observe the reaction of the public to his diversionary foreign policy ventures and modify his strategy in accordance with their reaction. When he realized that a more cooperative diversionary strategy lost its impact on the domestic public and that the Syrian people's attention was again drawn to domestic problems, he returned to a more mainstream diversionary strategy and raised the issue of the imminent threat of the state of Israel to Syria in order to again mobilize the people around his flag and deflect the attention of the people from domestic problems. In fact, his openness to contextual cues and incoming information from people allowed him to change his diversionary strategy within a very short period of time.

Finally, Assad's leadership analysis demonstrates that Assad was a leader who saw the world as a zero-sum game but who believed in the existence of some international norms and the possibility of cooperation. This worldview broadens the foreign policy options for political leaders and extends the scope of possible diversionary strategies. For leaders like Assad, although the state of Israel constituted an external other, and although he continuously scapegoated this country for domestic problems, he also believed that there were cooperative foreign policy actions that could rally people around his leadership. He therefore utilized multiple strategies when he was trying to divert the attention of his people.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION**

The diversionary theory of war has been one of the most debated theories in domestic politics/foreign policy interaction. For decades, scholars have tried to respond to questions regarding the different dimensions of political leaders' diversionary actions. This study was an attempt to contribute to this literature by trying to answer some of the unanswered questions in the field and more significantly by raising questions which have been neglected for decades. It also aimed to revise the diversionary theory, rescue it from the constraints of the use of force and integrate it with the different islands of theories on the public opinion and foreign policy nexus. Furthermore, the impact of leadership differences and leadership traits on the selection, formulation and implementation of diversionary action were analyzed for the first time in this study. Below, several outcomes of this study are summarized and some of the questions that need to be studied in the future are emphasized.

Mainstream diversionary scholarship has been centered on the use of force by US presidents during times of domestic economic problems, political scandals, low approval ratings and election years. The inordinate emphasis in the diversionary scholarship on using force for diversionary purposes and the predominance of scholarship on the United States have created strong assumptions on how to study the diversionary behavior of political leaders. According to these assumptions, public

distraction can only take place when that country is involved in an external conflict, and only through external conflict can a country sustain internal unity and “rally round the flag” of its leader. For decades, these assumptions have created important research problems, which have included researchers solely looking for diversionary motivation in cases of international conflicts and assuming that when a leader is not involved in an international conflict, that leader does not have a diversionary motivation. Thus it was assumed that the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy is worth studying when that particular country is involved in an international conflict. Because of that scholars of foreign policy in general and the diversionary theory of war in particular neglected the relationship between domestic and foreign policy interaction when leaders engage in peace-making ventures and cooperative foreign policy initiatives.

Problems like these have limited the scope of the diversionary theory and have neglected alternative forms of diversionary strategies and domestic uses of foreign policy. These problems also limited the understanding of foreign policies of countries. While some of the aggressive foreign policy initiatives were interpreted as policies intended to influence domestic public opinion, the peace-making ventures and other forms of diplomatic initiatives were never evaluated as such. This study attempted to challenge these general assumptions of diversionary theory of war and revise the theory with the help of existing and emerging studies in the field of foreign policy making and foreign policy and public opinion interaction. Previous studies in these fields have proven that leaders have more than one way of creating the “rally round the flag” effect and deflecting the attention of their domestic publics. According to these studies, it is also possible for political leaders to impact public opinion through diplomatic maneuvers and presidential dramas, including presidential speeches and foreign trips as well as peacemaking ventures. Most of these alternative forms are diversionary strategies are proven to be more feasible for many leaders due to their low risk and low cost. These

less costly and less risky alternatives also make it more possible for diversionary strategies to be employed by the leaders of countries other than superpowers.

Most of these alternative diversionary foreign policy practices have been discussed in studies that focus on public opinion and foreign policy nexus. However, they have never before been integrated into diversionary scholarship. This study was an initial attempt to develop a more comprehensive theory of diversion. It highlighted and examined Saddam Hussein's engagement in classical diversion through the escalation of conflict with Israel and his armed aggression towards this country, King Hussein's use of more peaceful diversionary strategies and Assad's use of both cooperative and conflictual strategies. These cases demonstrated the multiplicity of diversionary options for political leaders and the necessity of considering these other forms of diversionary methods in order to understand the sources of international conflict as well as of international cooperation.

This study also tried to overcome another problematic assumption of the diversionary scholarship regarding the relationship between regime type and the diversionary use of force. As mentioned previously, scholars like Gelpi (1997) who focus on diversionary behavior assume that only democratic leaders are likely to use diversionary strategies, since they would be the only leaders who would need such strategies. Accordingly, authoritarian leaders would not need this option since they are not accountable to any particular group or institution in their countries and can use force against any form of domestic opposition within their countries. Although one of the most prominent cases of diversionary use of force was the case of the authoritarian regime of Argentina and although recently scholars have disputed Gelpi's claims on the relationship between authoritarian regimes and diversionary use of force (Miller, 1995; Pickering and Kisangani, 2005), most of the scholarship in the field, particularly since the 1990s, has focused solely on the United States and the presidential use of force, which has essentially transformed the diversionary theory into a particularity of US foreign



policy. This study was also an initial attempt to overturn this assumption. The study demonstrates that authoritarian leaders may also employ diversionary strategies in order to either divert the attention of their publics from domestic problems or unify their people around their leadership.

Although there are no elections or free civil societies in authoritarian countries, authoritarian leaders also need the support of their people or of particular constituencies. Such a constituency may be a group of individuals who has a say in the decision making of the government, such as the politburo, or an institution, such as the military, which has the power to overthrow the authoritarian leader with a coup d'état. Authoritarian leaders also become particularly sensitive to the voices on the streets and feel vulnerable to public opposition when there is a recurring economic or social problem. Under these circumstances, diversion can be a helpful tool for them to change the political discussion within their countries and to regain domestic popularity.

In addition to these different forms of constraints and accountability on the part of authoritarian leaders, scholars of decision making also assert the familiarity of decision making mechanisms in democratic and authoritarian regimes when there are recurring economic or social crises in a country. Scholars like Hermann asserted that, regardless of the regime type under the crisis situations, there is usually a form of shrinking of authority among the upper echelons of power (Hermann, 1979). This phenomenon has even led some scholars to "question the extent to which the foreign policy process of democracies differs from that of autocracies" under crisis conditions (Merritt and Zinnes, 1991: 227). Since diversionary strategies are employed when a country faces some sort of domestic economic or social crisis, we can expect that a form of shrinking of authority can take place among the upper stratum of government as well, which also demonstrates that there will be not much difference between authoritarian and democratic regimes in terms of the decision making process when they utilize one of the diversionary strategies.

In the case studies above, I showed that authoritarian rulers, such as Saddam Hussein, King Hussein and Hafiz Assad, were sensitive to public opinion during their rule. They paid particular attention to public opposition and popular demonstrations in the streets. Although in some instances they used force against demonstrators and cracked down on protesters, they were aware that the constant suppression of opposition movements was not a viable strategy to stay in power. In some instances, when the countries they ruled had domestic economic or political problems, they opted to use one of the diversionary strategies in order to distract the attention of their societies and unify them around their leadership. Of course, the success of this strategy depends on different variables that need to be studied in the future. However, even the presence of this option and practice of it by authoritarian leaders demonstrate that diversionary strategies may be employed by all leaders, regardless of the type of government.

Finally, another reason for the hegemony of studies on the use of force by US presidents in the diversionary theory of war literature is the availability of data, such as presidential approval rates, economic indicators and election results, to conduct statistical analysis. It is almost impossible to reach this form of data in non-democratic and authoritarian countries, due to the lack of transparency and absence of elections and freedom of expression. However, this study aimed to show that despite the unavailability of this form of data in authoritarian countries, it is still possible to study the use of diversionary strategies by the leaders of these countries through the gathering and use of data from other sources, including studies of area experts and diplomatic historians. In this study I aimed to bridge this gap and create a dialogue between political scientists and diplomatic historians. Although the topics of war and international conflict have been widely covered by diplomatic historians, political scientists in general and foreign policy scholars in particular have ignored the findings of the scholars in this field. Especially, scholars of the diversionary theory have failed to utilize the causal explanations and evidences provided by diplomatic historians, which could

strengthen their hypotheses on the diversionary nature of some international conflicts. In this study I tried to overcome this lack of dialogue by using the arguments and findings of political scientists and diplomatic historians at the same time. The findings of historians, such as Efraim Karsh, Avi Shlaim, and Nigel Ashton and political scientists, such as Fred Lawson and Eyal Zisser are used together to strengthen the causal explanation for the diversionary argument. This dialogue demonstrated that the current data-driven nature of the diversionary scholarship is partly responsible for the predominance of the use of force by US presidents in the field and it is possible to overcome this problem by the effective use of data from other research programs and fields, such as diplomatic history. This study was an initial attempt to investigate possible venues of cooperation and collaboration in these fields but more studies are needed to create a stronger dialogue between these two fields in the future.

Together these findings demonstrate that the diversionary use of foreign policy is not a particularity of US foreign policy but, in a broader sense, is a theory of domestic politics and foreign policy interaction. The availability of less costly diversionary strategies for political leaders shows that leaders of less resourceful countries may also employ this strategy when they confront domestic problems. Moreover, the argument about the relationship between regime type and the use of diversionary mechanisms maintains that, regardless of the government type, the leader may find himself needing to use diversionary strategies for domestic purposes. Thus, besides leaders of a democratic superpower, such as the US, leaders of authoritarian and less resourceful countries, such as Iraq, Jordan and Syria can also benefit from these strategies.

In addition to these two revisions of the existing literature in the field, this study also contributed to scholarship on the diversionary theory by taking into account a long ignored variable, namely the role of leadership and leadership styles. Although the theory has argued that diversion is perpetrated

and implemented by a political leader to ensure his political survival, no study in the existing literature has ascertained the effect that the leader's characteristics and leadership traits have on the use of diversionary strategies. As a result, diversionary foreign policy action has been regarded as a mechanical reflection of domestic problems to the foreign policy realm and the effects of the leader's individual characteristics on this process have not been taken into consideration. The studies on leadership and foreign policy have demonstrated that leadership style makes a huge difference in terms of foreign policy decision making. According to the studies in this field, although domestic and international variables impact the decision making process in the foreign policy realm, these different variables are channeled through the prism of leaders and as a result, their leadership styles play an important role (Hermann, 1998, 2001, 2005). Despite these burgeoning studies on the relationship between leadership style and foreign policy, and although diversionary action can be considered a form of foreign policy, studies on the diversionary theory of war have neglected the possible relationships between leadership style and diversionary decision making. The studies in this field have not dealt with the effect of leadership styles on the formulation of diversionary strategy and the implementation of diversionary action. After making the two previous revisions to the theory, the rest of this study assessed the role of leaders and their leadership styles on the selection of diversionary foreign policy action during domestic economic or social distress. According to the outcome of this study, differences in political leaders' leadership styles may account for differences in the diversionary mechanisms that they employ.

The study focused on three different leaders (Saddam Hussein, King Hussein, and Hafiz Assad) who employed different forms of diversionary strategies during the Gulf Crisis and in its immediate aftermath. The three leaders led countries in the Middle East that had similar historical backgrounds and that were artificially created by Western powers after the end of World War I. The people of these countries share common cultural characteristics and societal structures. In addition, all three

countries faced similar domestic economic, social and political problems in this time period. The leaders of these three countries belonged to minority groups within their country. Saddam Hussein belonged to the Sunni sect of Islam in a country with a Shi'a majority. Hafiz Assad was an Alawite in a country with a Sunni majority and King Hussein was a Transjordanian in a country with a Palestinian majority.

These three leaders were also predominant leaders in their countries and had the power and authority to commit the resources of their countries singlehandedly for a particular foreign policy goal. They were deeply interested in foreign policy issues, always tried to engage in foreign policy decision making, and participated in the process of implementing these decisions. During the Gulf War and its aftermath, they used their power and authority to draw the foreign policy road maps for their respective countries. In fact, in terms of the foreign policy decision unit model developed by Hermann and Hagan (2001) to conduct comparative research in the field of foreign policy, they all belonged in the same category. This commonality allowed me to control the differences in decision making mechanisms and the number of actors and institutions involved in decision making processes in these countries.

The leadership trait analyses of these three leaders revealed some significant preliminary findings about the relationship between their leadership traits and the diversionary strategies that they selected during the Gulf Crisis and in its aftermath. As mentioned at length above, it was discovered that all three leaders had some sort of interpersonal emphasis during and immediately after the Gulf Crisis. Saddam Hussein was totally focused on relationships during this period whereas King Hussein and Hafiz al-Assad were motivated by both tasks and relationships. King Hussein and Hafiz al-Assad preferred to focus on a particular task when they thought it was more appropriate and opted to focus on forming relationships when they believed it was more useful for their regime. In

fact, both of these leaders had certain foreign policy goals in their mind during this period but in addition to these goals, they were also trying to ensure the support of their population. When they needed the support of their people, King Hussein and Hafiz al-Assad were more focused on strategies that could mobilize their people and boost their popularity within their country. In these instances, both of these leaders used some sort of diversionary strategies to provide the “rally round the flag” effect.

Previous studies in the field of leadership studies and diversionary scholarship report that the diversionary process, which entails a willingness to regain popularity among the constituency and unifying the people, is very much related to the relationship focus. As opposed to task-oriented leaders, who want to solve particular problems, leaders with interpersonal emphasis or those who are mostly motivated by relationships, depending on the circumstances, prefer to focus on their relationship with their constituents. As a result, instead of trying to solve domestic problems that they were facing, leaders with relationship orientation, such as Saddam Hussein, Hafiz al-Assad and King Hussein, opted to use diversionary strategies to win the loyalty and allegiance of their people.

Strategies	Relationship vs. Task Focus
Use of Conflictual Strategies Saddam Hussein	Relationship Focus
Use of Cooperative Strategies King Hussein	Relationship or Task Focus
Use of Multiple Strategies Hafiz al-Assad	Relationship or Task Focus

Table 5: Task vs. Relationship Focus and Use of Diversionary Strategies

A second leadership trait that was expected to be common for all leaders that use diversionary strategies was challenging constraints. Although Saddam Hussein and Hafiz al-Assad were constraint challengers during and in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf Crisis, King Hussein turned out to be a leader who respects constraints. These results somewhat challenge my expectation about the

relationship between diversionary behavior and challenging or respecting constraints. Scholars who have focused on respecting or challenging constraints, such as Jonathan Keller (2005), have emphasized that diverting the attention of the public in and of itself is a way of challenging constraints. According to these scholars, leaders who face some form of domestic constraint, which may include strong domestic opposition, domestic institutions, and popular protest have multiple options to deal with such constraints. They can either respect the constraints and adopt policies that take into account the policy preferences of the opposing groups or they can challenge the constraints and find a way to deal with the opposing groups. Those who choose to challenge constraints can either suppress the dissenting groups or find a way to divert their attention from domestic problems.

Strategies	Respect and Challenge of Constraints
Use of Conflictual Strategies Saddam Hussein	Challenges (directly)
Use of Cooperative Strategies King Hussein	Respect
Use of Multiple Strategies Hafiz al-Assad	Challenge (both directly and indirectly)

Table 6: Respect and Challenge of Constraints and Use of Different Diversionary Strategies

According to these scores there were differences among these political leaders in terms of their challenge of constraints. According to the leadership trait analyses, Saddam Hussein was too direct in challenging constraints and open to using force, whereas Hafiz Assad was skillful in both indirect and direct ways of challenging constraints. On the other hand King Hussein respected constraints. These results demonstrate that 1) the leaders who respect constraints can also use diversionary strategies and they most likely use peaceful mechanisms and 2) the way that these leaders challenge constraints may account for differences in the selection of diversionary strategies. Leaders who are more direct in challenging constraints and open to using force, such as Saddam Hussein, prefer to

use conflictual diversionary strategies, such as scapegoating, escalation of conflicts, or use of force; whereas leaders who are capable of challenging constraints both directly and indirectly, like Assad, may employ both conflictual and cooperative diversionary strategies within the same period of time. Although more studies may need to confirm this relationship, this initial study demonstrates that there may be a relationship between the leader's style of challenging constraints and his selection of diversionary strategies and that the form of challenging constraints may account for the variation in diversionary methods.

The leaders' openness to information was another leadership trait that was analyzed in relation to the selection of diversionary mechanisms. According to the earlier studies on the relationship between openness to information and foreign policy making (Hermann, 2001, 2005; Hermann and Preston, 1997), leaders who are closed to information prefer to depend on their own instincts and their own experiences on foreign policy issues when making foreign policy decisions, whereas leaders who are open to information prefer to follow contextual cues before making critical foreign policy decision. Since the diversionary engagement of a political leader is a form of foreign policy, his/her openness to information and contextual cues may also impact the way that he makes diversionary decisions.

Strategies	Openness and Closedness to Information
Use of Conflictual Strategies Saddam Hussein	Open or Closed to Information (Case by case basis)
Use of Cooperative Strategies King Hussein	Closed to Information
Use of Multiple Strategies Hafiz al-Assad	Open to Information

#### Task 7: Openness and Closedness to Information and the Use of Diversionary Strategies

The leadership trait analyses of the three Middle Eastern leaders above demonstrate that during the Gulf Crisis and in its immediate aftermath, Hafiz Assad was open to information, Saddam Hussein



was open to information on a case by case basis whereas King Hussein was closed to information and contextual cues. Of these three leaders, King Hussein, who was closed to information during the Gulf Crisis, opted to follow a more cooperative diversionary strategy. He had continuously used cooperative diversionary strategies throughout his tenure as King of Jordan when confronted with domestic economic, political and social problems and throughout the Gulf Crisis he did not change his strategy. On the other hand, Saddam Hussein, who was open to information on a case by case basis, opted to intensify his scapegoating strategy throughout the crisis when he observed that his strategy had struck a chord with the masses in the Arab world and that his popularity among the Arabs was rising. Thus, in addition to verbal attacks, Saddam Hussein used the threat of using force and used actual force against Israel. Hafiz Assad, who was open to information, chose to assess the incoming information and shifted his strategy dramatically from a cooperative to conflictual one when he recognized that the cooperative diversionary strategy was no longer bringing the expected results. Both of these leaders made decisions to revise or intensify their diversionary strategies in accordance with the contextual cues that they received. On the other hand, King Hussein, who was closed to information, opted to use the same strategy throughout the crisis. He neither intensified nor shifted his strategy during the crisis.

Finally, according to this study, a leader's motivation towards the world may also influence the selection of diversionary mechanisms. Earlier studies on the relationship between leadership and foreign policy have shown that the leader's perception of the world may shape his handling of foreign policy. Since diversionary action is a form of foreign policy, this trait may also influence the way in which leaders choose to divert the attention of their people. Saddam Hussein, who saw the world as a conflict-prone place, and who believed that leaders must vigilantly monitor developments in the international arena, employed conflictual diversionary strategies and verbally and physically attacked the state of Israel, whereas Hafiz Assad, who perceived world politics as a zero-sum

game in which conflict could be contained in some circumstances, chose to use both conflictual and cooperative strategies in order to distract the attention of his people in Syria. On the other hand, King Hussein, who thought that the world was not a threatening place and recognized that cooperation among states was always possible and feasible, employed more peaceful strategies to deflect the attention of domestic public.

Strategies	Motivation toward the World
Use of Conflictual Strategies Saddam Hussein	The world is a conflict-prone place
Use of Cooperative Strategies King Hussein	Cooperation is both possible and feasible
Use of Multiple Strategies Hafiz al-Assad	The world is a conflict-prone place but conflict can be contained

Table 8: Motivation toward the World and Use of Diversionary Strategies

The preliminary outcomes of this study reveal that there may be a relationship between leadership styles and the selection of diversionary mechanisms. In fact, one should not assume that all individual leaders act uniformly when they decide to use diversionary strategies and in order to better assess the variance in diversionary strategies, one needs to understand the leadership style of the individuals who interpret information and make foreign policy choices. Nevertheless, additional studies in this area are necessary for the following reasons: to provide a more comprehensive account of this relationship; to ascertain whether certain leadership traits are more significant than the others; to confirm, amend or rectify the results of this study; and to understand the true extent of the impact of leaders on the selection of diversionary mechanisms. In particular, the leadership styles that may account for variation in the use of diversionary strategies according to this study, including the motivation towards the world, need to be analyzed in order to assess the level and intensity of these relationships. While further studies are still needed in this field, this study suggests

leadership styles of political leaders may be one important factor influencing the selection of different diversionary strategies.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Challenging Constraints</b>	<b>Openness to Information</b>	<b>Relationship vs. Task Focus</b>	<b>Motivation toward the World</b>
<b>Use of Conflictual Strategies (Saddam Hussein)</b>	Challenge (directly)	Open to Information (On a case by case basis)	Relationship Focus	The world is a conflict-prone place
<b>Use of Cooperative Strategies (King Hussein)</b>	Respect	Closed to Information	Relationship / Task Focus (case by case basis)	Cooperation is both possible and feasible
<b>Use of Multiple strategies (Hafiz al-Assad)</b>	Challenge (both directly and indirectly)	Open to Information	Relationship/ Task Focus (case by case basis)	The world is a conflict-prone place but conflict can be contained

Table 8: The Relationship between leadership styles and the selection of different diversionary strategies

In addition to these theoretical contributions, this study also brings forth some practical issues that need to be taken into consideration by policy practitioners. The study demonstrates that political leaders can use different foreign policy events for domestic purposes throughout their tenure. As the scholars of diversionary theory of war report these leaders can create international crises and even military confrontations with other states in order to boost their popularity and approval rate within their countries. This study extends the diversionary theory a step further and argues that, in addition to some international crises, some peaceful and cooperative foreign policy ventures can also be manipulated by political leaders for domestic purposes. Leaders of countries with significant domestic economic and political problems may not be genuine in their peace-making discourse and instead follow these policies strategically for domestic consumption. This finding shows that the observers and mediators of international disputes need to be cognizant of the domestic circumstances in a country while interpreting peaceful and mixed messages of political leaders.

During the research and writing of this dissertation, some other questions came up about the diversionary theory and they need to be studied in the future. One of the most critical questions is how to figure out whether a foreign policy venture is really diversionary in nature. In this study, the opinions of authoritative sources in the politics of the region on the motivations of political leaders in their foreign policy actions were considered accurate. However, during the process of writing this dissertation, I also realized that there are no generally accepted standards or criteria which may be employed in order to determine whether an action is diversionary or not. Early attempts by scholars like Hendrickson (2002) and Cramer (2004) focused solely on the foreign policy making process in the context of the US and therefore the standards that they tried to develop may not be applicable to other countries and other political leaders. As a result, there were constant questions from skeptics about the validity of diversionary claims and about proving the existence of diversionary motivation

It is extremely difficult to prove that a leader is engaging in an act of foreign aggression or is attempting to establish peace not for the sake of national interest but to ensure his/her political survival. Even after a leader's tenure, he would be unlikely to confess that he spent the resources of his country and risked the lives of his country's citizens in order to boost his approval ratings or to be reelected. However, scholars may and can create some standards and measurements that may be applied to multiple leaders to analyze and assess whether their foreign policy action was intended to be diversionary in nature. In order to be able to conduct more comparative studies in the future, these standards need to be applicable for multiple cases and countries. The findings of this study contribute to the future studies by providing some preliminary insights about the relationship between leadership styles and the use of diversionary strategies. As mentioned at length above, this study shows that there is a relationship between some of the leadership styles and the use of diversionary mechanisms. According to this study, the leaders with relationship focus and those who challenge constraints are more likely to use diversionary strategies. However, some other additional conditions need to be developed in order to create a comprehensive account of diversionary foreign policy making.

In addition, considering the existence of peaceful ways of diverting the attention of a domestic public, further studies need to be conducted on the mechanisms that link domestic politics and foreign policy. In its classical form, the diversionary theory of war utilized Simmel (1955) and Coser's (1956) "in-group/out-group" hypothesis, which claims that a conflict with an out-group can bring unity within an in-group. With the findings of the instant study and the extensions of the diversionary theory of war, scholars must find new mechanisms to link domestic politics to foreign policy. Since early studies in this field utilized the sociological theories of conflict and cooperation, more interdisciplinary studies are necessary to discover the mechanism that we are looking for. In addition, we saw that state-controlled media, especially in the context of authoritarian regimes, play

an important role in mobilizing or rallying the people of a country around a foreign policy goal and in diverting their attention from domestic problems. Considering the impact of the media, future studies must pay more attention and research more deeply the relationship between diversionary behavior and the media.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Interviews and Speeches**

#### **SADDAM HUSSEIN**

##### **Saddam Domestic Interviews**

1-) Saddam, Egypt's Mubarak Conduct News Conference

FBIS-NES-90-068, 9 April, 1990

2-) Saddam Makes Statement to Iraqi Journalists

FBIS-NES-91-009, 14 January, 1991

3-) Baghdad Radio Airs Saddam's Interview with CNN

FBIS-NES-91-021, 31 January, 1991

#### **KING HUSSEIN**

##### **King Hussein Domestic Interview**

1-) King Hussein Comments on Arab and Domestic Issues

FBIS-NES-90-026, 7 February 1990

2-) King Hussein on Summit, Democracy and Eastern Front

FBIS-NES-90-094, 15 May, 1990

3-) King Interviewed on ACC Goals and Arab Affairs

FBIS-NES-90-037, 23 Feb 1990

4-) King Comments on Recent Unrest

FBIS-NES-90-102, 25 May 1990

5-) King Hussein on Israeli Plans and Peace Process

FBIS-NES-90-012, 18 Jan 1990

6-) King Hussein, Baker Brief Press

FBIS-NES-91-150, 5 August 1991

7-) King , Baker Brief Press

FBIS-NES-91-183, 20 September 1991

## **HAFIZ ASSAD**

### **Assad Domestic Interview**

1-) Al-Assad Interviewed by Egyptian Newspaper Editors

FBIS-NES-90-089, 8 May 1990

2-) Brief Press on Talks



FBIS-NES-91-138, 18 July 1991

3-) Al-Assad Addresses Clergy on Pan-Arab Unity

FBIS-NES-90-076, 19 April 1990

4-) More on Mubarak, al-Assad News Conference

FBIS-NES-91-140, 22 July 1991

5-) Al-Assad and Al-Hirawi Hold Press Conference

FBIS-NES-90-204, 22 Oct 1990

6-) Al-Assad Reviews the Gulf Situation and Role in Lebanon

FBIS-NES-91-008, 11 January 1991

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## **Education**

From Aug 2004 **Syracuse University Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, NY, USA**  
**Political Science Department**  
PhD Political Science  
Dissertation: “The Foreign Policy Decision Making and Political Leadership in the Context of the Diversionary War and Peace Strategies of the Middle Eastern Leaders”  
Areas of Study: International Relations and Comparative Politics

Fall 2005 **Syracuse University Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, NY, USA**  
**Political Science Department**  
MA in Political Science

2002-2004 **Marquette University, WI, USA**  
**Political Science Department**  
MA in International Affairs

2000-2002 **Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey**  
**Sociology Department**  
Minor in Sociology

1998-2002 **Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey**  
**International Relations Department**  
BS in International Relations

## **Teaching Training and Programs**

2010	<b>Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, Graduate School</b>
From 2007	<b>Syracuse University Graduate School Professional Development Program</b> University Teaching Certificate
2009-2010	<b>Syracuse University, Professional Development Program, Future Professoriate Program, Syracuse, NY</b> Teaching Associate

### **Independent Teaching Experience**

Summer 2009	<b>Syracuse University, University College</b> PSC 300 Politics and Society of the Middle East
Fall 2010	<b>Syracuse University, Political Science Department</b> PSC 359 Foreign Policy Decision Making
Fall 2008	<b>Syracuse University, Political Science Department</b> PSC 202 Political Argument and Reasoning

### **Conferences**

“Presidents, Approval Ratings, Standing and Diversionary Theories: Some Initial Ideas” will be presented at 2011 ISA Meeting, Montreal, Canada.

“Understanding the Effects of Leadership on Diversionary Behavior: The Diversionary Behavior of King Hussein and Saddam Hussein During the Gulf War” 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual ISPP Conference, San Francisco, will be presented July 7-10, 2010

“Rallying Around the Flag Internationally: The US President and their Use of Peaceful Strategies to Repair the Image of the US in the World” with Peg Hermann will be presented 68<sup>th</sup> Annual MPSA Conference, 22-26 April 2010

“Images, Identities and War on Terror in India and China” Lecture in New School, November, 2009

“Necessity, not Invention: Popular Culture and the construction of State Identity in China and India” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the ISA's 49th ANNUAL CONVENTION, BRIDGING MULTIPLE DIVIDES, Hilton San Francisco, SAN FRANCISCO, CA, USA, Mar 26, 2008

“The Past for the Present: The Use of History by Turkish Nationalists in 1990s”, presented at the Central Asian Studies Society Annual Conference October 29-30, 2006



“Creating Virtual Homelands: The Usage of Internet by Uyghur Diaspora”, will be presented at the Columbia University, Association for the Study of Nationalities 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, April 14-16 2005

“E-nationalism: Internet the Nationalist movements, Uyghur Case”, presented at the at the Marquette University Political Science Graduate Student’s Conference, April 2004.

“Rise of the Uyghur Nationalism in the Uyghur Autonomous Region of China” presented at Colorado University East Asian Graduate Associations Meeting, Colorado University, February 2004.

“Roots of Unrest Among Uyghurs in Uyghur Autonomous Region of China” presented at Midwest Conference on Asian History and Culture, Ohio State University, May 2000

## **Book Chapters**

“Erol Gungor ve Simdiki Zaman Turk Milliyetçiligi” (Erol Gungor and Contemporary Turkish Nationalism) Modern Turkiye’de Siyasi Dusunce (Political Thought in Contemporary Turkey), Edited by Tanil Bora, Iletisim Yayinlari, December, 2008

## **Articles**

“Ethnic Media and Politics: The Case of the Use of the Internet by Uyghur Diaspora”. *First Monday: Peer Reviewed Journal on the Internet*. Volume 10, Number 7. July 2005

“Ak Party’s Foreign Policy: Is Turkey Turning Away from the West” *Insight Turkey*, Volume: 12, Number 1, Winter 2010

## **Selected Book Reviews (in English)**

“The Kemalism in Turkish Politics: Republican People’s Party’s Nationalism and Secularism” by Sinan Ciddi, in *Middle East Policy*, Summer 2009

“Violence in the Middle East: From the Political Struggle to Self Sacrifice” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* November 2006.

"Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gulen Movement". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol.25:2

“Winning Turkey: How America, Europe and Turkey Can Review a Fading Partnership” by Omer Taspinar, *Insight Turkey*, Volume 12, No: 1, Winter 2010

“Iraq, Turkey and the US” *Insight Turkey*. Vol. 10 Issue 1

## **Selected Book Reviews (in Turkish)**

“Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey” Edited by Umit Cizre, *Kitap Zamani*, October, 2008

“Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey: Kemalist Identity in Transition” by Omer Taspinar, *Radikal Kitap*

“Islam, Secularim and Nationalism in Modern Turkey” by Soner Cagaptay, In *Radikal Kitap*. September 29, 2006

“Islam in Modern Turkey: An Intellectual Biography of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi” *Kitap Zamani*, May 1, 2006

“Social Movements and Politics in the Middle East” by Asef Bayat, *Radikal Kitap*, March 17, 2006

“Islamic Political Identity in Turkey” by Hakan Yavuz, *Radikal Kitap*, 21 October 2005.

“Religion, Modernity and Society in Turkey” In *Kitap Zamani*, September 4, 2006

“The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti” by Hakan Yavuz, In *Kitap Zamani*. August 07, 2006

“Religion and Society in Modernization of Ottoman Empire” by Esra Yakut, *Radikal Kitap*, March 3, 2006

“The Grand Turk: The Conqueror of Constantinople” by John Freely, *Kitap Zamani*, January, 2010

“The Defenders of the Faith” by James Reston, *Kitap Zamani*, December, 2010

“Levis Strauss and His Contributions to Social Sciences” *Kitap Zamani*, December 2010

“Samuel Huntington and Political Science” *Kitap Zamani* October, 2010

“Review Essay: Reading Middle East in the United States” *Kitap Zamani*, April, 2010

“Tormented Histories: Nationalism in Greece and Turkey” by Umut Ozkirimli, *Kitap Zamani*, August, 2008

“The New Turkish Republic” by Graham Fuller, *Kitap Zamani*, July, 2008

“State of Denial: Bush and the Iraq War” by Bob Woodward, *Radikal Kitap*, October 20, 2006

“Review Essay: Turkish Military and Society” *Kitap Zamani*. August 2008

“The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey” by Esra Ozyurek, *Radikal Kitap*, September 29, 2007

“Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey” by Esra Ozyurek, *Kitap Zamani*, April, 2008

“Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo Van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance” *Kitap Zamani*, March, 2008

“Review Essay: Bernard Lewis and the Middle Eastern Studies in the United States” in *Radikal Kitap* August 8, 2006

“Osman’s Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire” by Caroline Finkley In *Kitap Zamani*, July 05, 2006

“Turks in World History” by Carther Findley, *Kitap Zamani*, May, 2006

“An Ottoman Sultan in Lehistan” by Halime Dogru, *Radikal Kitap*, October 13, 2006

“Serif Mardin’e Armagan” by Ahmet Oncu and Orhan Tekelioglu, *Radikal Kitap*. February 2, 2006

“Kurdish Nationalism and Political Islam in Turkey” by Omer Taspinar, *Radikal Kitap*. January 06, 2006.

“Ethnic Conflict in Turkey” by Eric Jan Zürcher, *Radikal Kitap*. November 11, 2005.

## **Languages**

Turkish (native)

Uyghur (native)

English (fluent)

## **Professional Memberships**

Member of American Political Science Association

Member of Central Asian Studies Society

Member of International Studies Association

Member of Middle East Studies Association

Member of International Society of Political Psychology